'Bittersweet' reunion for Estrada and ailing mother

Story on Page A2

Security analysts say JI threat overplayed

THE NONDESCRIPT roundtable house in Cotabato City yielded some very unusual secrets. Police who scoured the house last week said they found a bomb-maker's compendium, including blasting caps and gunpowder residue, side by side with copies of the Koran and manuals with titles such as "Jihad in the Philippines."

The government, now on the trail of

SECURITY/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Ailing boy's faith moves mountains
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email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph | Monday, October 27, 2001 | 42 pages / vol. 18 / no. 321 | website: www.inq7.net

Cory, Sin defend Davide

Pro-Danding solons face mass actions nationwide

By Blanche S. Rivera, Alrain Papa and the PDI Northern Luzon, Southern Luzon and Visayas Bureaus

FOR THE FIRST time in almost three years, former President Corazon Aquino will be marching in the streets—this time to defend the integrity of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

Aquino, one of the two leaders instrumental in the People Power uprisings of February 1986 and January 2001, will speak at the protest rally scheduled at 2 p.m. today at the Batasan complex.

The other leader, Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin, also defended Davide, whom he called "one of the most trusted Filipinos after Edsa II."

Sin, the influential prelate who rallied on the people to rally to Edsa in 1986 and 2001, called on the Catholic faithful to pray for Davide in this "time of trial."

Last week, the Supreme Court chief was impeached by more than one-third of the members of the House of Representatives, many of them identified with businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., chair of San Miguel Corp.

Aquino and Cojuangco are first cousins.

Leandro Sipiatgan, Aquino's spokesperson, confirmed the ex-President's attendance at the rally, which was publicized through a heavy text campaign.

Protest rallies will also be staged across the Visayas, throughout Central Luzon, and in the Southern Tagalog region.

And in San Fernando, Pampanga, a city which hosts two San Miguel complexes, the campaign to boycott SMC products was backed both by business leaders and a congressman.

CORY/ A10

MOTHER'S DAY
It was Mother's Day yesterday for presidential aspirant Raul Roco (right photo) and deposed President Joseph Estrada. Roco dotes on his mother, Nora, during a birthday bash he hosted for his supporters at the Miriam College in Quezon City. Estrada, on the other hand, hugs his mother, Mary, at her home in Greenhills, San Juan. Estrada, who is on trial for plunder, was granted a furlough by the Sandiganbayan. (Story on Page A2.)

RACE/PAGES A2-A3

Solution to crisis at hand—De Venecia

By Carlos Pablo and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

A "DIGNIFIED and honorable settlement" is at hand in the Davide impeachment crisis, Speaker Jose de Venecia said yesterday.

"We're 90 percent already there," De Venecia told House reporters.

But a Lakas congressman, Albay Rep. Jose Ma. Sarte Salceda, said he expected the number of signatories to the second impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. to swell this week.

Salceda said 38 Lakas members signed the complaint "not on a party line basis and they would not withdraw because of the party line." He said the Nationalist People's Coalition accounted for only 48 of the 93 signatories to the impeachment case and the 45 non-NPC signees based their decision on the facts of the issue.

But Lakas spokesperson Heherson Alvarez told the RMN radio network that the Lakas members who signed the complaint were "rushed" into supporting the NPC initiative. The NPC, founded by businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, is Lakas' partner in the ruling coalition.

Alvarez said the Davide impeachment case was such a "serious issue" that the Lakas members should have consulted the party

SOLUTION/ A10

Congress, Supreme Court on collision course

By Amanda Dacanilla

ANALYSIS

THE ZERO hour for deciding whether the second impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. within a year breached the Constitution is fast approaching as the House of Representatives endorses the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate this week.

With the completion over the weekend of the verification of the signatures of 93 House members who signed the articles—more than a third of the House members—the complaint moves on to the Senate, igniting an explosive constitutional issue that many fear could spark a constitutional crisis more severe than the one that rocked to the limits the stability of institutions during the impeachment trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada three years ago.

A collision between the Supreme Court and the legislature—two of the three cornerstones of Philippine democracy—appears inevitable as Davide steady maintained over the weekend that the complaint accusing him of alleged irregularities in the disbursement of the Judiciary Development Fund "is an unprecedented breach of the doctrine of separation of powers, an attack on judicial independence and abuse of the rules on investigation in aid of legislation." The complaint breaks ground, as it is the first time in the history of Philippine constitutional democracy that a chief justice has been impeached, thereby as-

CONGRESS/ A10

Namfrel warns of anarchy, fraud in May elections

By Blanche S. Rivera in Manila and Carla P. Gomez PDI Visayas Bureau

SELECTIVE automation of the 2004 polls will lead to cheating and anarchy, a private election watchdog warned yesterday.

The National Movement for Free Elections said the Commission on Elections' plan to automate only 10 areas "might bring about retarding" and leave more space for dagdag-bawas (vote padding and shaving) because 70 percent of the country would still be subjected to manual counting.

"Now more than ever we need credible elections because there are so many candidates running," Namfrel chair Jose Concepcion told the Inquirer in a phone interview yesterday.

Concepcion said he shared the sentiments of House Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. who expressed concern that if the election results do not conform to the public perception, the losing candidates could easily take their protests to the streets and create political instability.

Around 300 counting machines representing the last batch of delivery are expected to arrive in the country today. Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. was in Korea over the weekend to check on the machines personally, ac-

NAMFREL/ A10

Anti-Bush books US best sellers

WASHINGTON—A year from the US presidential elections, books condemning George W. Bush and his administration are thriving.

Opposition pundits have their political lie detectors fixed permanently on Bush's speeches and statements.

The alarms go off regularly, feeding the anti-Bush books that are riding high on the US best-seller list but without appearing to upset the president's hardcore Republican supporters.

US presidents never get an easy time from the opposition ahead of an election. Just ask the last White House occupant, Bill Clinton, who was impeached over Monica Lewinsky.

ANTI-BUSH/ A9

ATTACK IN IRAQ

No. 2 Pentagon official survives rocket barrage

BAGHDAD—Anti-American forces blasted the Baghdad hotel where US Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz was staying with a barrage of rockets on Sunday, but the No. 2 Pentagon official survived unharmed, US officials said.

A defiant Wolfowitz vowed that the United States would not be cowed into abandoning Iraq after the brazen attack that he said may have killed one American.

An American soldier was killed and 15 others were wounded in the strike that was considered another setback for the Bush administration, undermining its insistence that the United States was winning the guerrilla war in Iraq despite escalating violence.

The blast of the rockets hitting the Al Rasheed Hotel at about 6 a.m. (0300 GMT) echoed across the city as a clear, rapid series of explosions. Several guests were thrown from their beds by the impact.

Some people were carried out of the hotel on stretchers and others walked away with blood on them after at least six rockets slammed into the building, destroying rooms on stories below Wolfowitz's on the 12th floor, witnesses said.

Wolfowitz, a major force behind the US invasion of Iraq, was led away by security forces. He appeared composed after descending a stairwell past thickening smoke and blood stains with a fire alarm blaring, witnesses said.

"These terrorist attacks will not deter us from completing our mission, which is to help the Iraqi people free themselves from the types of criminals who did this and protect the American people from this kind of

PENTAGON/ A9

A US Army medical vehicle rushes to the Al Rasheed Hotel in Baghdad, where US Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz (inset) was staying, following a rocket attack that killed an American soldier and wounded 15 others on Sunday. AP

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

'Bittersweet' meet for Erap, ma

By Marlon Ramos

IT WAS a bittersweet reunion yesterday for Doña Mary Ejercito and her favorite son, former President Joseph Estrada.

They wept as they embraced at the entrance to the Ejercito matriarch's home on Kennedy Street in posh Greenhills, San Juan at about 10 a.m.

It was the first time that mother and son had seen each other since April, when Doña Mary visited the ex-President on his 66th birthday at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City, where he used to be detained.

San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito quoted his father as telling the frail 96-year-old "Ina ang tagal mo nang hindi namin nakasama, sa wakas nagkasama-sama kayo" (It's a happy reunion for the family, although we know that it will be only for a while," Ejercito told the Inquirer.

36 hours

The Sandiganbayan's special division trying Estrada for plunder had given him a 36-hour library pass after Dr. Leroy Herrera, his nephew and family doctor, testified that Doña Mary was in "very unstable" condition.

"At her age, anything can happen," said Herrera. Mrs. Ejercito was recently confined at the San Juan Medical Center for a heavy cough, which doctors said was a symptom of pneumonia.

The physician added that the old woman had been bedridden since her discharge from the hospital on Oct. 8. He had developed chest abdominal spasms, any one of which could have at any moment end her life within minutes, Herrera said.

This delicate condition was the reason that Estrada did not leave Camp Capinpin in Tanay, where he is currently being held—as exactly 5 a.m. when the guard took office, Palafox Ferdinand Ramos said Doña Mary would have been widely derided, had she seen her son so soon as she woke up.

More rest

Former San Juan Mayor Angelo Estrada said his father cohosted Doña Mary to get some more rest by visiting with her so her own would offer his arrival.

"It would have been much better if the court allowed my father at least a week out of prison," the former mayor told reporters outside the house. "But it just for short a time for this family to be with him."

Jinggoy said the family would have the usual Sunday get-together at lunch and dinner. "This is just more special because my father is here," he said.

A Mass was also slated at 6 p.m.

The ex-President, who has been detained for two years and seven months, is also scheduled to undergo medical examinations for bone loss and joint pains during the last six hours of his furlough. He is due back at Camp Capinpin before night-fall today.

No interviews

Reasons for giving a news conference every chance he gets, Estrada greeted by the Sandiganbayan injunction not to give interviews or any media statements. Apart from the trip to the hospital, he was also under strict orders to remain in his mother's house.

Only a few media men were allowed inside to get video footage and sound bites of the modest and non-eventful.

WHAT does it take to score an ex-President? Apparently plenty if you're Joseph Estrada and you're going to visit your mother. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Estrada arrived by helicopter, which landed at a nearby vacant lot on Diliman Avenue, where some 500 supporters were waiting for a glimpse of him, displaying evidence in khaki jacket and pants, he waved at them from a black SUV that carried him into the posh neighborhood.

He was escorted by Army Brig. Gen. Prospero Nebbi and a team of more than 60 black-clad policemen.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Estrada was once being accorded treatment befitting a former head of state.

In an interview over GMA radio, Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo had been "consulted with the candidates of the former president," contrary to news that she had been "making life difficult" for Estrada.

"She has been generous in giving (privileges) to the former President, even to the extent of the rules of court," the spokesperson said, noting that Sto Mitopoqui did not protest Estrada's brief release yesterday. The motion had "boomed (Estrada's) morale," Bunye said.

In fact, Bunye said, should the Sandiganbayan decide to approve Estrada's plea for house arrest, Malacañang would pose no objections.

With GIL C. Cabacungan Jr. and reports from REUTERS, AP, Agence France-Presse

'Now it's Angara pitting Pimentel against Drilon'

By Christine O. Avendaño

IT SEEMS like the season for coup rumors in the Senate once again.

There is talk of preemptive plot to wrest the Senate presidency from Franklin Drilon, this one supposedly engineered by opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara.

In a text message Angara denied the new opposition Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. to take over the top Senate post.

Drilon himself heard the alleged plot yesterday as he told the Inquirer that he has accepted fellow majority Sen. Manuel Villar Jr.'s explanation about an earlier coup rumor.

Villar, leader of the so-called Wednesday Group in the Upper House, said he wasn't involved in any plot to unseat Drilon.

But photo-conscious, 26-member-strong Senate president said a congressman had informed him about the latest plans for a power grab.

"A congressman told me that Dennis Hasted, a consultant for Angara, was spreading talk in the Lower House of a coup in the Senate with Angara putting up 19 votes against me," said Drilon.

Angara denied he was behind any such plot. "Somebody is creating gossip and false stories," he said.

Also in a phone interview, Angara said the recent rumors were merely a reflection of the "uncertain" times. "Had this been a time when people were more confident, these things would be laughed off."

Pimentel also said he was "not privy to any rumor" to unseat Drilon.

"Sen. Sr. (Drilon) should not dignify the rumors," Pimentel told the Inquirer. "It doesn't become him or his office."

Drilon has not withdrawn that he continues to enjoy the support of the 22-member Senate's majority.

Contenders for the Senate presidency would need 13 votes to oust Drilon. There are currently 12 senators belonging to the majority bloc, against 10 from the minority.

Asked for the probable basis for the coup rumors, Drilon could only surmise that they had to do with the 2004 elections being just around the corner.

One of the senators' two sources yesterday told the Inquirer that no plot of the sort could take off given the "slim" chance of some senators in the majority and minority blocs smoking "very deep differences."

NPA rebels, military clash; 10 killed, 5 hurt

By Christian V. Esguerra

AT LEAST 10 people, including four soldiers, were killed and five others were wounded when about 30 guerrillas of the communist New People's Army ambushed an Army patrol in Isabela on Sunday.

A police report said yesterday that an Army platoon was crossing the river at Sitio Camantan in Barangay Ramang, San Mariano town, when they were attacked by NPA rebels at around 8:45 a.m., setting off a gun battle that lasted for six hours.

Six NPA guerrillas were slain in the fighting although their bodies were dragged off by their comrades. Their names were also not available.

The report by the Philippine National Police-Cagayan Valley operations identified the slain troopers as Sgt. Marcelino Abanilla, 32; Leonardo Bedol, and Wilmito Alfonso Cortes and Arlie Cubildo. Wounded were Corporals Virgilio Alcantara, Gabriel Gellecan and Wilfredo Lagmanay, and Privates Sonnie Mills and Jude Peñada.

Army reinforcements, backed by two attack helicopters, were hunting the guerrillas in Isabela, said Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Jose Ma. Rotiñda.

In another development, two regional communist insurgency leaders were arrested in a raid in the southern town of San Luis in Agusan del Sur province on Saturday, the military said.

Alleged district guerrilla chief Bernabe Michaels and his deputy Lorna Sangalang were arrested in a raid which also netted a pistol and assorted computer and communications equipment, the military said in a statement. With reports from AP, AFP

more on A2

After Cuneta fest, FPJ still needs some convincing

By Christine O. Avendaño, Gil C. Cabacungan, Jr. and Marlon P. Manlit

MOVIE actor Fernando Poe Jr. will hold a series of consultative meetings in key cities around the country in the next two weeks to gauge the public pulse before deciding whether to run for the presidency in next year's polls.

The actor's appearance Saturday before a crowd of supporters at the Quezon Agriculture in Pasay City marked the beginning of the series of consultations he would be making, an opposition source told yesterday.

"He [Poe] would go to Cebu, Baguio and Dipolog" slate in the next two weeks," Sen. Vicente Sotto III, who has been designated by Poe as his spokesperson, told in a phone interview.

Sotto said he would announce after All Souls' Day on Nov. 2 whether Poe would make himself available as the presidential candidate of the united opposition in the 2004 elections.

The senator was supposed to announce Poe's political plans last week but deferred it because that the fallen boxer-actor plans to hold consultative meetings with groups clamoring for his candidacy.

Some, an old friend of Poe's in the movie industry, said if ever Poe decides to join the race, "it will be because of the people".

"To date in case he wins classes, he will not be beholden to any political ties or vested interest."

Sotto said Poe did not announce his plans during the first anniversary of the Filipinos for Peace, Justice and Prosperity Movement (FPJPM) because the latter was not required to do so in the first place.

Debtor reinstated the crowd that attended the event at between 9,000 to 12,000.

In last Saturday's FPJPM anniversary, Sotto said that Poe had the chance to meet and talk with the people behind the movement.

He said Poe also went to see the group to "thank them for their confidence and trust in him."

Teary-eyed

FPJPM officials presented to a teary-eyed Poe the movement's continuing two million signatures urging Poe to run.

The signatures, officials of the group said, were collected nationwide over the past year. Most of the signatures were from Metro Manila, Southern Tagalog and Pangasinan.

But administration ties, Sotto's backers say, "99.9 percent sure" that Poe will not run after the latter failed to make the announcement in last Saturday's affair.

"The number of people who attended the affair coupled by the pomp and pageantry whipped up by his supporters last Saturday were enough to churn up FPJ's emotions in order to give in to their request. However, it never happened," Sotto wrote in a statement.

'A failure'

Sotto has also accused some members of the opposition of using Poe to wrest power from the present administration—an indication, he said, that the opposition cannot find a legitimate standard-bearer to pit against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"I'm sure he would be a failure," said Rep. Raul Gonzalez, an ally of Ms. Macapagal, pointing out that Poe has never served in government.

Lakas-Kampi-opposition Rebecorn Alvarez yesterday dared Poe to run first for barangay captain before taking a shot at the highest position in the land.

In an interview with DZRH radio, Alvarez said the country needs a president who has at least the capability and experience to look after the country's interests.

"If a presidential candidate has never served at least as a barangay captain or councilor, where will you get the experience?" he said.

But supporters of the action star were unfazed, saying they would continue to press their idol to run for the presidency.

Ruste Cadawonis, FPJPM president, said the group would hold a meeting to map out their plans for the coming days.

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"He will have until Jan. 2...He will set aside and he decides to run," Cadawonis said, referring to the deadline for the filing of candidacies.

Cadawonis's group was instrumental in gathering the two million signatures encouraging Poe to run.

Although Poe did not announce that he would be running for president, Cadawonis was still hopeful the actor would make a decision "soon."

In case he wins, Poe would be the second movie star after former president Joseph Estrada to occupy Malacañang.

Estrada won a landslide victory in 1998, only to be toppled in a military-backed popular revolt less than three years later following a tumultuous rule marred by corruption allegations and economic deb-

HOW QUICKLY THEY TURN ...
An intermittent Marcos loyalist shows her true colors during Saturday's bash for actor Fernando Poe Jr., who did or did not disappoint those awaiting his decision on next year's presidential race, depending on one's thoughts on the matter

Last week, local chain prize diner on news that Poe, a high school dropout who has consistently been one of the top five preferred candidates cited in recent national surveys, was about to declare his candidacy.

Nestor Aguila of DA Market Incorporated said the likelihood of FPJ becoming a presidential candidate has spooked the markets.

"That has fueled pessimism and the market is likely to trade sideways with a downward bias until it has fully discounted FPJ's (possible) candidacy," Aguila said. With an AFP report

Bangko Sentral sets 'name-and-shame' drive vs erring banks

By Cielras S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas will reveal to the public the names of erring banks as part of ongoing efforts to introduce increased transparency and discipline in its regulatory practices.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said the policy-making Monetary Board has resolved to disclose the identities of banks violating BSP rules and regulations to guide the public in their decisions on whom to put their money.

Banks found violating foreign exchange regulations or those unequally engaging in insider lending would be exposed to the public but only once the Monetary Board has firmed up the guidelines for its name-and-shame campaign.

The only time the central bank exposed erring banks was in August 2001 when it disclosed the names of nine lenders found violating foreign exchange rules at a time when the peso was volatile.

"It is part of our good governance, market transparency and consumer education program. This is standard practice in the United States and other countries. At the same time, we have to let your promise come into play," Reyes said.

But monetary authorities, according to Reyes, would until be a better time to move into a regime of full disclosure. In the next five years, full transparency could be better implemented, he said.

A name-and-shame campaign could have repercussions on banks suffering from the liquidity efforts of the Asian financial crisis when bad loans swelled after borrowers were unable to repay their debts.

Reyes said banks would have no fear about the ability of peso to non-performing loans and secured assets. Banks have been given until April 2008 to shall themselves of tax incentives under the Special Purpose Vehicle Act to get rid of about P500 billion in non-performing loans and assets.

"We have to eventually move towards market reasonableness to instill discipline in the financial system. But at this time, the BSP is not yet ready for hanging. The system is not fully vibrant," said the BSP deputy governor.

Reyes said the central bank has started an information campaign to enhance the public's as well as policymakers' and lawmakers on the intricacies of the banking system.

Lorenzo pushes novel way to clean up Laguna Lake

AGRICULTURE Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. wants to open the Napindan Channel in Taguig to allow seawater from Manila Bay to flow into Laguna Lake.

"Experts say that seawater has a disinfecting effect and can rejuvenate Laguna Lake, enhancing the growth of its fish and aquatic resources and the economic activity of the area," Lorenzo said.

Lorenzo yesterday directed the Laguna Lake Development Authority to coordinate with the Metro Manila Development Authority for the opening of the Napindan Channel.

He said that since seawater has a "disinfecting effect" on the lake, this would help remove the "muddy taste" from tilapia and tilapia cultivated in the area.

Lorenzo said that because the Napindan Channel is other than at the center of the rainy season as a flood prevention measure, the lake experiences an overproduction of algae, causing tilapia and tilapia grown in the area to have a "muddy taste."

"Proper scheduling of the opening and closing of the channel will answer to a semi-solution for both Laguna lake fishers and Metro Manila residents during the rainy months," he explained.

The Laguna provincial government recently embarked on a plan to enhance and unify the environment management systems of its 20 towns, including those around the lake.

Aside from the offer of assistance from the Swedish International Development Agency, the provincial environment and natural resource office also got support from Global Linkages Foundation for the Filipino Youth.

"We seek to enhance these environment management systems while at the same time raise the consciousness of the youth about the environmental concerns facing the province," said Laguna Governor ER Ejercito Estrada.

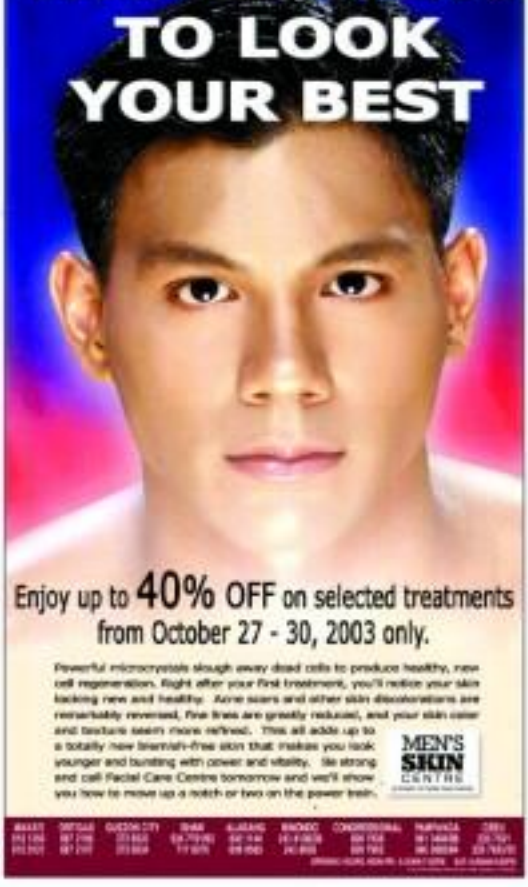
"Laguna Lake is under the jurisdiction of the LLDA but the province, especially the towns around it is responsible for its continued survival," Estrada said.

The Lt. supports the claims of small fisherfolk to be granted the same access to fishing rights and privileges as Laguna lake given to large fishpen operators but warned that agreements in the country's biggest freshwater lake should be further negotiated in persons overfishing.

"By forming the small ones in to groups or cooperatives, small fisherfolk could viably invest in Laguna de Bay by putting up barangay or village fish cages, and clean

benefit from the resources of the lake," Lorenzo said.

He said the lake offers opportunities for small fishers' groups during periods of algae bloom when fatigue outbreak have been all-time, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources found hopes in Taguig for the feed-eating catch the size as fish bait in catching cross. Norman Bordadora



Papal Nuncio won't be deterred from visiting Basilan

John S. Alipala
INQ Mindanao Bureau

BASILAN—Strong winds and an angry sea failed to discourage the Most Reverend Antonio Franco, Papal Nuncio to the Philippines, from visiting this once-disturbed province.

"While we were traveling, I was so scared because of the big waves. I don't know if the Apostolic Nuncio felt the same," said Basilan Bishop Martin Jumoad. "When I sighted Malamawi Island, I said congratulations, we made it and we were all safe."

The inclement weather was nothing compared with what the Catholic faithful on the island had gone through in the past four years, the papal nuncio said upon arrival on Friday.

En route to the center of Isabela town, Franco reached out (unintelligible) from his vehicle and offered his hand to Christians and Muslim women and children.

He was repeatedly advised against coming here, he told the Inquirer. "Many people told me don't go, but I always said I wanted to," he said in Spanish.

Addressing Basilenos at the Sta. Isabel Cathedral, Franco said, "My heart is full of joy and I am grateful to the Lord for the graces He has given me ... to come finally to Isabela City and to Basilan."

He assured them that Pope John Paul II has been "closely monitoring the sufferings of Basilenos from violence and terror."

And since he became papal nuncio, Franco said, the island, "especially the Church and the people," had often been on his mind. "My prayers and my thoughts are for you."

He urged them to renew their own faith, intensify evangelization and "become authentic witnesses to the Church's dialogue for peace with other faiths and believers." If they recommit themselves to the Lord, Franco said, they could create a "revolution of peace, understanding and reconciliation to forgive and accept forgiveness."

Franco was determined to make the most of his two-day pastoral visit.

He went to the Catholic churches in Maluso, Lamitan, Begang in Isabela City, the remote villages of Tumahubong, Sumisip and Lantawan.

At St. Peter's in Lamitan, which was devastated by military strikes on June 2, 2001, some of the churchgoers cried while listening to Franco's homily.

After the mass, he inspected the ongoing massive repairs.

Anita Hassan, 41, said she was "very happy" to learn that the Vatican had not forgotten them. "We are strong," she said, "but we believe that [Franco's] presence and message of love for Lamitanons have made us stronger."

Leticia Agustin Ndjula, who converted to Islam when she married a Muslim, made sure she would see the Pope's envoy. "My mother and my teacher once told me that when a papal nuncio visited, he lifted everyone's spirits," she said. "Now I know it's true."

Ramadan to begin today after moon wasn't sighted

CITIMUSU CITY—Some million Muslims in the country start the 30-day Ramadan fasting today, the Islamic United Ulus ne Ulusan of Ophion declared Saturday night.

Ustadz Omar Pangan, Muslim Mindanao's mufti, the exalted (mufti or religious leader, officially proclaimed: "Efforts at sighting the moon from strategic points in the south failed on the 29th of the lunar month of Sahan (Saturday night), and so the fasting will start on Monday."

All over the world, over two billion more Muslims will likewise observe the tradition instituted by the Prophet Mohammad. During the whole of Ramadan, or the ninth month of the lunar-based Islamic Hijera calendar, they will abstain from food, drink and sex from dawn to dusk.

Exempted from fasting are pregnant, breast-feeding and menstruating women, the sick, the elderly and children below the age of puberty.

Fasting is an ancient religious tradition attributed to Biblical prophets and their followers.

In his book, "Islam in the Bible," the American scholar Thomas McElwain, wrote: "Though underplayed, fasting was a basic practice throughout the Bible—from Deuteronomy to the Gospels." On the other hand, Islam had "legislated" fasting because through it people "learn self-restraint and earn good health." McElwain noted, quoting both the Koran and St. Matthew's gospel.

He also pursued in having in various periods of history an environment as at least 20 passages of the Christian Bible. Noah B. Mamalinta, *INQ Mindanao Bureau*

Reyes app't hailed, panned

POLICE officials have hailed the appointment of former Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes as chief of the police's elite anti-kidnapping unit, even as they quashed speculations it was a sign President Maranpagal-Arroyo had lost trust in the police leadership.

The President named Reyes co-head of the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response (Pacer) unit and the Anti-Kidnapping Task Force, in addition to keeping his current posting as Ambassador-at-large for counter-terrorism.

"There's a good sense because there will be someone who will orchestrate (all anti-kidnapping efforts)," Police Director General Director-General Director (Ret.) told reporters in an interview on Friday.

"Secretary Reyes' designation is a welcome development the PNP would support. Kidnapping for ransom is a complex problem that entails unified action by all government agencies and the private sector," said Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bruneil, police information officer.

But the militant group Bayan Muna questioned Reyes' appointment, saying that the administration was making an "authoritarian maneuver" of the former defense chief.

Reyes resigned as defense secretary last Aug. 29, one month after 28 disgruntled junior military officers who staged the failed Oakwood mutiny had demanded his head after accusing him of being behind the bombings in Mindanao and the rule of mass to rebels.

"This is extremely dangerous. Both military and police powers are bestowed on a defense secretary. Reyes, making him the most powerful man afforded to the Aquino government," Bayan Muna national chair Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

Bayan doubted off speculations Reyes' appointment was an indication the President had lost her confidence in the police leadership's ability to lick the kidnapping problem.

"So, we view it as a recognition of the complexity of the KFR problem. We view it instead as a strong support for the PNP," he said.

Malacañang officials had admitted that Reyes' appointment as anti-kidnapping czar was an offshoot of businessmen's clamor for drastic action against kidnap-for-ransom syndicates. *(Unspecified)*

Bigger axe to fall on CIDG, chief says

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE CEBERAL Investigation and Detection Group would be hardhit in the massive revamp to be undertaken by the Philippine National Police, even CIDG officials said yesterday.

CIDG chief Eduardo Matillano said the CIDG's Anti-Transnational Crime Division would be most affected by the "intense cleansing" after some of its officials and operatives were implicated in at least two cases of kidnap-for-ransom involving P20-million.

Two CIDG officials, Supt. Elmo Sarmiento and Senior Insp. Romeo Orlando, and three CIDG agents are set in the process of being dismissed for their alleged involvement in criminal activities.

Matillano said he was looking for "honest and able" officers to replace Sarmiento and Orlando.

"The Anti-Transnational Crime Division is very crucial to the ITOG and the PNP," he told the reporters. "We can't afford to have officials with questionable characters there," he said.

Sarmiento allegedly led a group of CIDG operatives in arresting businessman Philip Ang Chiew on the strength of a purportedly bogus warrant and demanded P15 million for Chiew's release last month.

Earlier this month, Orlando and his men allegedly used the same modus operandi in force Dr. Frank Aragon and some friends to give them P5 million worth of jewelry and close to P1 million in cash for their release.

The two incidents forced Gen. Matillano to sack the CIDG officials. Their unit is now headed by Senior Supt. Romeo Tambuyuqui who is also chief of the CIDG's operations division.

PNP chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. on Friday warned that policemen involved in illegal activities would be the first to go in the planned reshuffle.

"If a policeman is involved in kidnapping," he told reporters, "he's a criminal and he should be treated as such."

Gen. Ebdane's remark had tarnished the image of the PNP in the past three months would also be a basis for relief, according to Ebdane.

Two weeks ago, negligence by operatives of the CIDG's Office of Reinvestment's Crescente enabled an Abu Sayyaf detainee to kill three policemen and wound three others while attempting to escape from Camp Crame.

Wanted: Indigenous cops

THE NATIONAL Police Commission is encouraging more indigenous peoples to join the police force.

Napolcom, which held recruitment and promotion exams for police yesterday, reminded members of cultural minority groups that they could avail of "bonus points" and a height waiver if they want to join the force.

Commissioner Linda Ilomilla, in a statement, said an additional five points would be given to members of cultural minority groups or tribes who take the Napolcom-administered police exams.

The passing grade in the exams is 70 percent.

Ilomilla said a height requirement waiver would be issued to applicants who present a certificate of confirmation from the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA) or the National Committee on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) that they belong to cultural groups.

Police hopefuls who are not part of cultural minority groups should be 5'4" to height if they are male, or 5'2" if female.

Napolcom may also grant waivers for weight and educational attainment to applicants who possess special qualifications, skills or attributes useful to the Philippine National Police, Ilomilla said. Margaux Ortiz

Security analysts say JI threat overplayed

[illegible] 20 suspected terrorists it may escape] before the raid, nominator the Sidoarjo cell by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) regional network, which has been blamed for last year's devastating Bali bombs and linked to the al-Qaida terror group.

Some observers analyze said the patrol's fall to low-profile town last week was partly on worries the Jemaah Islamiyah was becoming a major threat.

But is it really?

There has been no big terror attack in Metro Manila since a series of bombings in December 2000, which were linked to Jemaah Islamiyah. There has also been no major violence in the country since a bomb ripped through a crowded market in South Cotabato in May, killing nine people and wounding 41 others.

If the Jemaah Islamiyah is targeting the Philippines, it certainly has not been very successful, according to some security experts and analysts.

They conclude the Jemaah Islamiyah threat, while real, is not as big as it used to be and is being played up to do full by the military and the government in a bid to solicit US military aid.

"A lot of it has been overplayed," said one foreign analyst, who asked not to be identified. "If you look at whether the JI is causing terror in the Philippines, then the answer is no."

'Sinister plans'

Nevertheless, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced Friday the government was "elevating the JI into our national threat spectrum," a day after the Philippine navy a highly covered war on the JI University Council.

"We have decided to update our priorities," she said. "The JI evidence plan on hand, deadly and far-ranging, both intended to threaten our country and now that in the region."

On Thursday, Ms Macapagal paraded the latest catch in the war on terror—Indonesian Taufik Rahim, who the government says is Jemaah Islamiyah's overseas chief in Mindanao and provider of information leading to the raid on the house in Cotabato City.

He one Hapsin that Mindanao, a sprawling area that is home to about five million Muslims in the overwhelmingly Christian Catholic country, is a hotbed of militancy. The government has been fighting four Moro rebel groups there for years, including the Abu Sayaf and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). It pursues one leader with indictments for their alleged international name roamed over who comes and goes.

More questionable is the degree to which the Jemaah Islamiyah has kept its grip in Mindanao since 2000, when government troops overran MILF training camps believed to have been used by it to train.

Running out of friends?

One reason behind the government's recent success may be that Jemaah Islamiyah no longer has a friendly environment for its Jemaah Islamiyah.

The death earlier this year of elderly MILF leader Salamat Hashem and his replacement by the more moderate Ebrahim Murad may have helped to make Islamic sympathetic to Jemaah Islamiyah militias the rebel group that is now focusing on peace talks with the government.

Another fact, a Singapore-based security expert, said while Jemaah Islamiyah remained a major threat throughout Southeast Asia, its Philippine operations had likely been weakened.

"The prospects for the JI in Mindanao have diminished because of Dulmatin's [Jakhir's death," he said.

The slain could help explain the mysterious killing of suspected Jemaah Islamiyah bomb-maker Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi this month.

Authorities said they killed the fugitive in a shoot-out, but there are persistent reports he had been betrayed by a Moro rebel group which killed him come to government forces.

Whatever the reasons, the timing of the killing just days before US President George W. Bush visited Manila raised suspicion about the authorities' haste and motivation.

"The timing was just quite unbelievable," said the foreign analyst. "They (the military) are under pressure to show how active they are and how well they are doing."

The Cotabato City police chief who ordered after the evidence found in the raid was planted. The city's mayor said the house did not appear to have been used in months. Reuters

The Daily Gospel

Monday, October 27, 2003
30th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Rom 8:12-17
Gospel: Lk 13:10-17

Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath and a crippled woman was there. As evil spirit had kept her bent for eighteen years so that she could not straighten up at all. On seeing her, Jesus called her and said, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." Then he laid his hands upon her and immediately she was made straight and praised God.

But the ruler of the synagogue was indignant because Jesus had performed this healing on the Sabbath day and he said to the people, "There are six days in which to work; come on those days to be healed and not on the Sabbath."

But the Lord replied, "You hypocrites! Is there any one of you who does not on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it out to the watering place? And this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound for eighteen years, should she not be freed from her bonds on the Sabbath?"

When Jesus said this, all his opponents felt ashamed. But the people rejoiced at the many wonders done by him.

Commentary:

"Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." The word "infirmity" was used by the Jews to express their universal sin or penalty was carried. It also meant freeing an animal from its yoke. Jesus is the one who frees the human person and invites us to follow his example. Another word for salvation is the Bible is liberation. It is both liberation from sin and liberation to. It is liberation from whatever enslaves and dehumanizes us and we are to embrace ignorance, oppression and moral evil in us. It is liberation in something positive that makes a person fully human and free.

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PAL returns to Malaysia

THE COUNTRY'S national flag carrier resumed direct flights to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, yesterday, five years after operational and financial problems forced Philippine Airlines to suspend the service.

"PAL is gradually returning to its core markets and KL is an important part of that mission expansion," airline president Avelino Zaragoza said in a company statement.

PAL will fly Boeing 747-300 jets from Manila to Kuala Lumpur four times weekly—on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday—with return flights the following day.

The resumption of flights was originally scheduled in May, but was postponed after the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) discouraged air travel.

Kuala Lumpur is PAL's 23rd international destination and its fifth in Southeast Asia.

PAL first flew to Kuala Lumpur in 1977, but the service was suspended in June 1998 after operational and financial difficulties forced the airline to restructure its route network.

PAL's return is expected to boost two-way traffic between the Philippines and Malaysia, which is forecast to expand by an average of five percent annually, the airline said. AP, AFP

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Pentagon official survives attack

From page A1

terrorists," Wolfowitz told reporters hours after the attack.

An unshaven and tired-looking Wolfowitz, wearing a blazer and open-necked shirt, said he received a report that an American had been killed.

US military officials later confirmed that the hero fatality was an American soldier.

Seven American civilians were also wounded, along with four US military personnel and four civilians from other countries in the 25-member coalition occupying Iraq.

Iraqi security guards discharged gunfire with the attackers and wounded two of them, according to Capt. Charles Steward, spokesperson for the 1st Armored Division. He did not know if anyone had been detained.

Injuries were generally minor and caused by flying debris and possible smoke inhalation, he said.

"We have unconfirmed reports of 15 wounded," another military official said.

Wolfowitz was paying his second visit to Iraq in three months and had stressed the need to speed up the formation of Iraqi security forces.

Members of his traveling party, who had been dressing ahead of a breakfast meeting, calmly walked down stairs and gathered in the lobby before exiting the building with about 200 people, including journalists and US civilian contractors. In one corridor, survivors waded calf-deep through water from a burst pipe.

The 12th-floor room in which an American may have died was destroyed, according to a journalist who saw the devastation. Part of the ceiling collapsed, the door was blown off, a hole was punched in the wall and smoke poured from the room.

Lucky to survive

Escalating guerrilla violence in Iraq has eroded President George W. Bush's popularity among Americans worried at the rising US death toll. Wolfowitz's boss, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, warned earlier this month that the United States faced a "long, hard slog" in Iraq.

Guerrilla attacks have angered the United Nations, the Jordanian Embassy and a hotel used by US media. The attack on the Al Rasheed was the second in a month on the hotel. Attacks on the US military in Iraq have killed more than 148 troops since Bush declared major combat over on May 1.

On Sunday a US military spokesperson, Agr. Danny Martin, said six to eight rockets hit the west side of the hotel.

Steve Macsay, a journalist with Middle East Broadcasting based in Dubai, said the two-inch-thick wooden exterior door to his room was completely destroyed by the attack.

"I was a very lucky person. The rocket hit both sides of one wall," he said. "It threw me out of bed." He said the hallway was full of smoke and "it was pretty hard to see."

The hotel is part of a compound on the west bank of the Tigris River used by the US-led administration. It is in a fortified complex that includes palaces built by deposed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

A US Apache gunship flies around a burning Black Hawk helicopter, which was shot down in Tikrit, Iraq, on Saturday.

A Reuters photographer saw five impact holes on the west side of the hotel. He said three of the rockets appeared to have gone through the wall, the others through windows.

The whole area was sealed off and US military helicopters circled the building.

On Saturday, Iraqi guerrillas fired rocket-propelled grenades at a Black Hawk helicopter which came down near Tikrit, wounding one American soldier, Mirdocks had left. Tikrit by helicopter for Kirkuk just hours earlier.

Wolfowitz said he was not changing his scheduled events following the attack. He faces a full day of meetings in Baghdad and a panel of the city ends a military visit before leaving for Washington on Sunday. Reuters

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Anti-Bush books US best sellers

front page A1

But now the gloves are off.

In a demonstration against the Iraq war in Washington on Saturday, many of the demonstrators wore a badge proclaiming "When Clinton Lied, Nobody Died." The current Democratic presidential front-runner, Howard Dean, regularly accuses Bush of lying to the nation.

The public appears to be joining the polemics.

Oscar-winning documentary

Michael Moore's book "Stupid White Men, Or Whatever Happened to My Country" has led the best sellers since it was released this month. Publishers expect it to have a similar success to his last book about the US ruling classes, "Stupid White Men," and has joined Oscar-winning documentary against the American gun culture, "Bowling for Columbine."

This time Moore looks into the economic profits of the Bush family and friends, the al-Qaida rival, Osama bin Laden, and the oval film that have been credited to the name of the war on terror.

Moore, who ran for majority Democrat contender Wesley Clark, makes no attempt to hide the political objective of his book. "There is probably no greater inspiration during the subject than the defeat of George W. Bush in the 2004 elections."

Lying liars

"Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right," by satirist Al Franken is No. 3 on the best-seller list and has also created controversy since it came out in August.

The book condemns the media for Franken says supports the US Right, like Rupert Murdoch, which says the slogan "Fair and Balanced," failed in an attempt to stop the publication of the book.

"We, the [illegible] and I'm proud of it," said Franken. "I believe most Americans are liberals just like me."

He added: "We are the country that has created in only 15 years of Americans say they want to weaken environmental regulations. But the 7 percent are in charge."

David Cross, an humorist for the left-wing weekly The Nation, has joined the campaign with wealthy Bush, "The Lies of George W. Bush."

"George W. Bush is a liar. He has lied large and small. He has lied shrewdly and by omission. He has misstated facts, known to be wrong and has lied with a straight or not," said Cross, who also has a website, http://www.bushlies.com, to promote the book.

"Bushwhacked" by Texas journalists Molly Ivins and Lou Dubose, "Big Lies" by Joe Conason, or "The Great Deception" by renowned economist Paul Krugman also do not pull any punches in criticizing the Bush administration.

Bush ratings

The 59 can't lost its votes after the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States in 2001. Bush's response to the attacks gave a major boost to his ratings.

But Bush's ratings have been brought down again by the Iraq war and the failure to find weapons of mass destruction after the downfall of Saddam Hussein.

Some conservative media have criticized the "hatred" that they say is being directed against the president.

"I get the feeling that some Democrats had so much hatred for Bush that they had go beyond left over Saddam," said David Brooks in the Weekly Standard.

Right-wing radio commentator Limbaugh has also made fun of the writers who have profited from Bush books.

"What drives them nuts is that people actually like Bush," he said. "Even if they disagree with him they think he's a good person." AFP

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Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

Pursuant to Section 7, Rule 7 of the Rules of the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC-009, as amended), the public is hereby notified of the Panel Interviews at the old Supreme Court Session Hall, Third Floor, Old Supreme Court Building, Taft Ave., Manila, of the following applicants/recommendees for the (5) positions of ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE COURT OF APPEALS:

MONDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2003 (10:00 A.M.)	**(2:00 P.M.)**
1. Bautista, Edmundo D.	1. Antonio, Oscar Amando R.
2. Reyes, Jacinto V.	2. Avila, Arthur P.
3. Antonio, Antonio L.	3. Asuncion, Noel Sy
TUESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2003 (10:00 A.M.)	**(2:00 P.M.)**
1. Rivera, Ruben C.	1. Cruz, Ma. T.
2. Baring, Ruperto G.	2. Cortes, Librada B.
3. Barcelona, Ismael O.	3. Cruz, Rhythm C.
WEDNESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2003 (10:00 A.M.)	**(2:00 P.M.)**
1. Gutierrez, Godofredo L.	1. Dimaano, Rosario B.
2. Salinas, Monina D. J.	2. Dizon, Cleona H.
3. De Leon, Magdangal M.	3. Rumpa, Virginia Roberta
THURSDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2003 (10:00 A.M.)	**(2:00 P.M.)**
1. Flores, Alfredo C.	1. Gloria, Cipriano U.
2. Hernandez, Benny Cyrus	2. Garrido, Graciano L.
3. Fajardo, Carmelita Gutierrez	3. Quimpo-an, Nilsonia B. Jr.
FRIDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2003 (10:00 A.M.)	**(2:00 P.M.)**
1. Garcia, Lita S. Tolentino	1. Cuanco, Valentin C.
2. Singzon, Rosmia F.	2. Abraham, Jesus B.
3. Dimaapi, Aguamin V.	3. Imperial, Eugenio A.
MONDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2003 (10:00 A.M.)	**(2:00 P.M.)**
1. Manzon, Luz Quitoriano	1. Monge, Agripino O.
2. Mendoza, Ruth C. P.	2. Mathay, Renato S.
3. Mariano, Theresita Reyes	3. Pasaberg, Josie B.
WEDNESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2003 (10:00 A.M.)	**(2:00 P.M.)**
1. Padilla, Trinidad Belleza	1. Pineda, Ernesto L.
2. Peralta, Romeo de Lemos	2. Hofileña, Victoria Veloso
3. Pamaran, Romeo Calagan	3. Quilala, Elvi G.
THURSDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2003 (10:00 A.M.)	**(2:00 P.M.)**
1. Rubio, Angelina C.	1. Sunga, Jose A.
2. Rabadon, Zenaida Mendoza	2. Tanglaoman, Eduardo I.
3. Buan, Raul B.	3. Undaloman, Rosario S.
	4. Vivero, Augustine S.
FRIDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2003 (10:00 A.M.)	**(2:00 P.M.)**
1. Victorio, Manuel S.	1. Villanueva, Benigno C. Jr.
2. Victoria, Marita Cuesta	2. Vinluan, Liberato V.
3. Villareal, Alejandro M.	3. Yanga, Bienvenido A.
	4. Zamora, Romeo F.

No visitors in the premises (sic). No interviews shall be conducted in public.

23 October 2003

LUZVIMINDA D. PUNO
Clerk of Court
Ex Officio Secretary

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozon

Saudi faces imminent attack–US, UK

RIYADH—The US Embassy in Saudi Arabia warned on Saturday that "terrorist" groups in the kingdom might strike during the coming Muslim holy month of Ramadan, after Britain said attacks might be in the "final stages" of planning.

Saudi officials vowed to thwart any "terror" plots in the oil-rich kingdom, birthplace of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

The hunger month of Ramadan starts on Monday in Saudi Arabia.

A US advisory issued in the Saudi Capital Riyadh said:

"The embassy continues to receive information that terrorist groups within the kingdom are still active and planning future operations.

"It is the embassy's assessment that terrorist groups may place special operational significance on the upcoming month of Ramadan and American citizens are therefore urged to be particularly vigilant during this time."

Saudi Arabia has intensified a crackdown on Muslim militants since suspected al-Qaida suicide bombers hit expatriate housing compounds in Riyadh in May, killing 35, including nine Americans.

It has arrested nearly 600 people since then, in the latest operation, weapons and explosives were seized including bomb belts of the kind used by suicide bombers.

"Saudi security forces are working hard to foil any terrorist opportunities, and have uncovered several cells in the past months and thwarted all their plans in destabilizing or carrying" a Saudi official told Reuters without giving details.

He said security forces continued "intense" efforts to maximize security in the world's biggest oil exporter.

In London, Saudi Ambassador Prince Turki al-Faisal criticized the British warning in a statement: "The kingdom wishes that whoever has advice to give by western methods the kingdom that there would be coordination between the people giving this advice and the authorities of the kingdom."

Britain and Australia said early on their attacks against Westerners might be imminent, and London on Friday stepped up its warning to citizens to avoid Saudi Arabia.

"We believe that terrorists may be in the final phases of planning attacks," the British Foreign Office said.

Australia, which allied itself with the United States and Britain in the Iraq war and has strongly identified with the US campaign against violent Muslim groups like al-Qaida, issued a similar warning on Thursday.

The US mission issued an advisory on Oct. 15 saying Saudi authorities received "the ominous"

Syria says it may hit Golan should Israel attack again

LONDON—Syria will strike back if Israel attacks again, and could hit Israeli settlements in the Golan Heights, Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara said in a British Sunday newspaper interview.

Syria did not retaliate after Israel raided what it called a "terrorist camp" near Damascus earlier this month, its first strike on Syria in three decades.

"After we were attacked, we acted in a responsible way and went to the United Nations, and a majority of our people supported that," Shara told the Sunday Telegraph.

"But if we are attacked again the people will not stand for it, and we will have to carry out the will of the people," he said.

"We have many cards that have not been played. Don't forget there are many Israeli settlements in the Golan...I am not exaggerating but I can describing things as they might happen."

Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria in 1967 and annexed the territory in 1981. The two countries are officially still at war.

Israel struck Syrian territory on October 5 after a suicide bomber killed 19 people in a Haifa restaurant in the northern Israeli city of Haifa.

Israel said its target was a base for Palestinian militants.

Syria has come under increasing pressure from Washington to crack down on Palestinian militants.

Washington has long included Damascus on its list of states that sponsor terrorism, and the House of Representatives voted all this month to impose diplomatic and economic sanctions on Syria for so long as the White House considers it a terror supporter.

The Senate must pass the bill before President George W. Bush can sign it into law.

Shara told the Sunday biograph the government of President Bashar al-Assad had shut down representative offices of Palestinian militant groups Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

Shara also said Syria was unable to stop militants from crossing into Iraq to attack U.S. troops there.

"They are very determined and many of them dream of seeing an American tank," he said. Reuters

N. Korea ready to consider US security offer

SEOUL—North Korea, in a significant shift in a year-old nuclear crisis, said Saturday it was prepared to consider a US offer of security guarantees in return for Pyongyang dropping its atomic weapons programs.

But, in comments from a foreign Ministry spokesperson, the Communist North said it was too early to assume most multilateral nuclear talks would be held until Pyongyang had ditched Washington's insistence on using diplomatic channels.

US President George W. Bush proposed the unspecified written undertakings this week during an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) meeting in Bangkok.

"We are ready to consider Bush's remarks on the written assurances of nonaggression if they are based on the intention to coexist with the DPRK and aimed to play a positive role in realizing the proposal for a package solution on the principle of simultaneous action," the spokesperson said.

DPRK are the initials of the North's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The North's official KCNA news agency published the spokesperson's comments in English.

"It is premature to talk about the six-way talks under the present situation since the will to accept the principle of simultaneous actions is confirmed," he said.

In Washington, the White House reacted cautiously to the the apparent shift in tone from North Korea.

"We're looking at the message and we hope North Korea will return to the Beijing six-party talks," White House spokesperson Jimmy Orr told Reuters.

China hosted an inconclusive first round of talks in Beijing in August with Japan, Russia, the two Koreas and the United States.

"This is a responsible reaction which will set a positive tone for the next round of talks," said Wu Jianmin, director general of the Asian American Affairs department at the South Korean Foreign Ministry. Reuters

A WILDFIRE burns along the 23 Freeway in Moorpark, Calif., Oct. 21. The California Highway Patrol closed a portion of the freeway. AP

'Devil winds' fan flames near Los Angeles suburbs

LOS ANGELES—Wildfires devastating the Los Angeles suburbs doubled in size Saturday, consuming at least 15 houses and forcing thousands more people to flee, officials said.

Some 3,500 homes were threatened as the fire zone grew 10,000 hectares in just 12 hours, as the winds drove the flames toward multiple parts of the second largest US city, officials said.

Hot, desert "Devil winds" fanned the flames from the slopes and ridges of a mountain range further into residential areas about 100 kilometers northeast of downtown Los Angeles.

"It's been a very bad day indeed," said Bobbi Tinsenteg, fire information officer for San Bernardino National Forest, where the blaze is raging.

"The fire has spread dramatically because the winds have been driving it hard and were at or entering enough to prevent us from flying firefighting aircraft, allowing it to spread further."

The blaze was so intense that it sent a thick haze of smoke over Los Angeles which lies miles away.

The fire was only 20 percent contained as 1,200 firefighters worked to control it, up from 1,000 fighting the flames a day earlier.

The army of firefighters had been backed up by a flotilla of planes and helicopters to push back the inferno that was lapping around homes and forced the closure of two major freeways all day Friday.

The fire, that officials say was started Tuesday by arsonists, has consumed a total of at least 15 houses, two outbuildings, six cars, a boat and a firefighting helicopter that had been hoisted in back due to mechanical difficulties.

Officials estimated the damage at $6 million, with the flames showing no signs of abating.

The blaze, one of at least six that have broken out in southern California in recent days, is menacing the areas of Fontana and Rancho Cucamonga, in San Bernardino County.

There were upside hearing developments in Rancho Cucamonga, where seven homes have already been burned down, were more at risk as the region's strong Santa Ana winds whipped up the flames.

Firefighters were ploughing open fields between residential areas to create fire breaks and lighting controlled blazes to consume the fires' fuel and stop them from advancing. AFP

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WORLDBRIEFS

Israel dynamites Gaza buildings

BETARAM JUNCTION, Gaza Strip—The Israeli army demolished three large, empty buildings in the Gaza Strip early on Sunday in what it said was retaliation for a deadly Palestinian attack on a nearby Jewish settlement. Troops also rounded more than 1,000 Palestinians from neighboring homes before triggering the explosives, which sent clouds of black smoke billowing up and rattled the area for kilometers around, damaging many other structures. The demolition of the 13-story buildings, embattled apartment towers owned by Palestinian security services, rubbished as terrorist nests further underlined the old reckoning that has stalled the US-backed "road map" to peace. The bulldozing of the Gaza City overshadowed the heavily guarded settlement of Netzarim, where two gunmen smashed an attack on Friday that killed three soldiers. Troops shot dead one of the militants, but the other escaped. Reuters

Rescuers free Russian miners

NOVOSIBIRSK, Russia—Rescue teams in southern Russia's coal mines said 10 coal miners known to be trapped alive in a flooded mine shaft on Monday could be rescued by Saturday. But a further 13 men were still unaccounted for following Thursday evening's mining accident, when workers from an underground lake surged through tunnels 800 meters below ground. Reuters

8 killed in 2 quakes in China

BEIJING—Two powerful tremors shook a remote region of northwestern China, killing eight people and seriously injuring dozens of others, the government said Sunday. Local officials reported collapsed houses and scenes of mass aftershocks. The earthquakes—measured at magnitudes 6.1 and 5.9, respectively—struck a desert area of Xinjiang province at 8:41 and 8:48 a.m. Saturday, the official Xinhua News Agency said. AP

Increased assaults against Peace Corps

DAYTON, Ohio—Assaults against Peace Corps volunteers around the world more than doubled from 1991 to 2002, with nearly 1% percent committed against women, a new study reported. A Peace Corps-commissioned study that assault cases jumped 35% percent during the 11-year period, while the number of volunteers increased by only 26 percent, the Dayton Daily News said in a report for Sunday's editions. There were 280 assaults in 2002, up from 178 in 1991, the newspaper said, and 120 assaults throughout the first six months of this year. Peace Corps spokesperson Barbara Daly disputed the newspaper's interpretation. She said that since 1991, the agency has had a 30-percent increase in the rate of major sexual assault cases—including such things as touching and unwanted kissing—and a 33-percent decrease in the rate of rape cases. The newspaper said that although the number of rape cases did decrease from 20 in 1991 to 13 in 2002, the number of all sexual assault cases increased from 1216-94 during that period and the overall number of assault cases—including aggravated assault, simple assault, sexual assaults and death threats—rose from 261 to 280. AP

SPORTS

Wind Blown, Midnight Lady triumph

By Edwin Villanueva

HE CAME back. He raced. He won.

Wind Blown wrested with the racing name to victorious fashion last night as he walloped the field in the Lady & Gents Special race at the just-perked Santa Ana Park.

Displaying the old, powerful strides seeing him unbeaten in the last six months, Wind Blown swept home to an impressive four-length win to share the day's limelight with a fast-rising filly named Midnight Girl.

While Wind Blown sent the crowd roaring in delight as dusk set in, Midnight Girl caught everyone's fancy early in the afternoon by bringing down Triple Crown two-leg winner Pinot Boutell in the Sta. Lucia Realty Cup.

"Talented at makaveau. He's definitely back," said Ronnie Esguerra, Wind Blown's owner, who flew in from a business trip abroad just to catch his prized galloper make his comeback race since tearing at the same track last April.

"Hopefully we'll enter him in the coming Philippine Mirra Cup and then the Manila Breeders' Cup," added Esguerra, referring to the New Year's Day 2,000-meter festivals, where Wind Blown is expected to be dubbed as the Climate.

Wind Blown, bred by Sandy Javier and trained by Ernesto Manalang, covered the 1,300-meter race in 1:34 flat, with star jockey Jeffrey Zarate easing him up in the last 50 meters.

"Pushing praise. Blessed ya," said Zarate, reunited with the 7-year-old Hunie-Wind in My Best property whom he last rode to victory in a regular race last July 29, 2001.

It was the 39th win (122 strikes runs) in 67 career starts for the 2000- and 2001-horse of the Year, who has now earned more than P10 million, the most by any local galloper.

Another Esguerra bubble entry, Real Dew, followed Wind Blown home, with 2000 Triple Crown champion Silver Dollar bobbing to finish third, after challenging the winner at the backside. All for Glory was fourth, while Royal Lancer was fifth.

Two races earlier, recent Derby winner Midnight Lady (Dehez Pete Midnight Lass) outkicked Pure Sound down the stretch to prevail by a head under the brilliant driving of Joe Dilema.

"Thrilling finishes," said winning owner Ed Gonzales of the three-year-old chestnut filly who is also set to join the Imperio Championship of the Dilindo Mile Cup.

It was the 3rd win (22 strikes runs) in 47 career starts for the 2000- and 2001-horse of the Year, who has now earned more than P10 million, the most by any local galloper.

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Mandella, Pleasantly Perfect shine

ARCADIA, California—Trainer Richard Mandella completed the greatest day in racing history when his Pleasantly Perfect swept past the leaders in the stretch and won the $1-million Breeders' Cup Classic on Saturday.

Mandella, a native Californian, who often works in the shadow of Bob Baffert and D. Wayne Lukas, also won the $1.5-million Juvenile with Action This Day, the $1-million Juvenile with Hallowed and his fellow countryman Godolphin Flying Start, who finished with High Chaparral in the $1-million Turf.

But it was Pleasantly Perfect's stunning win in the Classic that had the crowd roaring at Santa Anita.

With favorite Medaglia d'Oro and Congaree locked in a stretch duel, Pleasantly Perfect charged past them on the outside and won by 1 1/2 lengths. Medaglia d'Oro finished second for the second year in a row. Dynaver was third.

Kennedy Derby and Preakness winner Funny Cide was never in contention and finished ninth in the 10-horse field. Defending champion Volponi, who ran the final race of his career, was last.

Pleasantly Perfect simply ran the best race of his career in beating many of the world's top horses.

The 5-year-old son of Pleasant Colony, ridden by Alex Solis, came into the race off a victory in the Goodwood Handicap three weeks ago on this track. Clearly, the horse loves the course.

And Mandella has himself an early birthday present. The trainer who turns 55 on Nov. 1 won two Breeders' Cup races the last time these championships visited Santa Anita, 10 years ago.

Of the seven horses he ran favoring four two and two others sacked, bringing the total earnings to $4,364,000. Trainers earn a standard 10 percent, but expect his owners to do him some extra cash.

"I never thought lightning would strike twice, but it struck twice," Mandella said.

Mandella shared a spot in another kind of history as Julie Krone, aboard Hallowed, became the first female jockey to win a Breeders' Cup race.

While Mandella celebrates, Bobby Frankel will have a hard time recovering from another dismal day at the Breeders' Cup.

Frankel, who won eight races, including three for Medaglia d'Oro, Fighting Fit in the Distaff and Adalmoon in the Sprint—and did one win. He is now 2-for-57 in the Breeders' Cup.

Pleasantly Perfect, ridden by Alex Solis, covered the 1.25 miles in 1:59.06 and returned $30.40, $9.60 and $6.80.

Congaree was fourth, followed by Held That Tiger, Perfect Drift, Evening Attire, Tiznow, Left Bower, Funny Cide and Volponi.

The upset virtually assures that the retired Silverbulk will end up as Horse of the Year. Medaglia d'Oro, Perfect Drift and even Funny Cide never really to make a claim to the title with a Classic victory.

With the victory, Pleasantly Perfect earned $2,000,000 for Gerald J. Ford, who owns Diamond A Racing Corp.

Leaving from the No. 2 post, Pleasantly Perfect was still seventh with a half mile to go, and 10th with a quarter-mile left. But when Solis swung his horse outside, Pleasantly Perfect responded with energy.

High Chaparral, with Michael Kinane up, and Jockey Alex Solis, figure in the first deadheat in the 20-year history of the Breeders' Cup.

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Attacking the courts

EDITORIAL

THE IMPEACHMENT case engineered by the powerful Nationalist People's Coalition in Congress against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. is not only a gross abuse of legislative power. It is also an ominous assault on the judiciary.

We view this attack on the country's courts with alarm. Despite its many shortcomings, the third branch of government has provided stability and constancy to the political environment since democracy was restored in 1986.

Some of its economic-related rulings have been wrong, but on the political issues, the Supreme Court has largely called it right. On the controversial cases involving ill-gotten wealth accumulated during the Marcos regime, including the ultimate disposition of the P100-billion account levy fund, the high court in the last few years has moved with both courage and dispatch.

This is why the country has suddenly found itself thrust into a constitutional crisis.

The second impeachment complaint against Davide names the most serious abuse constitutional principles: the rule of law, separation of powers, accountability. But the allegations about the Judiciary Development Fund are actually flirting disguise. In truth, this impeachment case is a ploy stopping the Supreme Court in its tracks.

The judiciary is often referred to, even in classical constitutional theory, as the weakest of the three branches of government. This is because it is a "passive" agency: it can only act when it is requested or required to act. And when it acts, its decisions need to be enforced by the other branches of government.

And yet, at key moments in the life of the nation since 1986, the courts have shown an "activist" bent—that is, they have used the cases at hand to help shape both policy and history. The Supreme Court, in particular, has used its prestige and its power to persuade to settle issues that have threatened to divide the nation.

In possibly its most significant decision since Cayetano Arellano was named the first Chief Justice, the high court in January 2001 intervened to save the nation. And then, in a series of landmark decisions, it upheld the constitutional legitimacy of the administration that came to power.

The legal adage couldn't be more precise: The Constitution is what the Supreme Court says it is. We may argue whether an act of government is constitutional or not, in fact in the exercise of our responsibilities as citizens we are all of us encouraged to do so, but there must be a limit to the arguing. In our system of government, that limit is reached when the Supreme Court says so.

This is precisely why the second impeachment complaint against Davide within a year is an attack on the judiciary—because it usurps the Supreme Court's power to say what is constitutional or not.

On the face of it, the second complaint already runs counter to the Constitution, because the fundamental law provides that not more than one impeachment case can be initiated against an impeachable official within a year, as a safeguard against harassment. As Fr. Joaquin Bernas, SJ has already pointed out, the deliberations of the 1986 Constitutional Commission prove that this was what the framers had in mind.

The House Rules define initiation differently. If there is a conflict between those rules and the Constitution, which should prevail? Even non-lawyers know the answer to this basic question. But congressmen insist that the vote to impeach Davide was constitutional, as at least that the Senate rule on the question of constitutionality.

House House leaders sought assurance by the NPC impeachment campaign, like Majority Leader Prospero Nograles II, emphasize that Davide has no choice but to go to the Senate for trial. Otherwise, Gonzales said, Davide should resign. This is the sound of a politician who, sensing the NPC's handcuffing on the congressional wall, is desperate to hold on to his job.)

Since 2001, the opposition has smeared the judicial system—for daring to hold deposed President Joseph Estrada to account for corruption, or Sen. Panfilo Lacson for summary execution, or assorted politicians in May 2001 and July 2003 for abetting rebellion. Into this cocktail pours the Davide impeachment bid (in, like you hand to valiant glass.

The blow is crushing: we must parry it with public outrage.

Lakas terrified by possible FPJ candidacy

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

LET'S not mince words. Former President Marcos and Arroyo told the public the other day that they couldn't stop it. She was referring of course to the reported presence of foreign terrorists belonging to the Jemaah Islamiyah running loose here with their explosives and bombing people, but her very own people are never before benefited not by the terrorists but by just one person. He goes by the initials FPJ.

By his nonsense self, this guy, just like the characters he portrays in the movies who prompt the bad guys to have some just by the nerve that he is coming, has seen fitness crawling up and down the spines of "cogon" in the administration and its cronies that he may run for presidential next year. In Del. They're already in a panic. And he hasn't done anything yet. Why shouldn't they panic? If FPJ throws his hat into the presidential ring, they would all be jobless in eight months.

So, in treatment of spending, they're starting the engine like the rocket's preparing for its Indian liftoff. FPJ has not yet made up his mind but the running dogs of the administration have been already let loose a triple-barreled blast against him. Eleven chinchirin are already belching but didn't to run the government. Even former President Fidel V. Ramos who should already be an elder statesman and should behave better is being used to run down FPJ.

"He deserves better," he said.

In which FPJ has retorted: "He deserved better during your term, too. If we were idiots to put up with you then, we can put up with FPJ. He wouldn't possibly be worse than you."

Interestingly, that other clique in Malacañang, headed by Executive Secretary Ermita, obviously to save the movie actor into deciding against running. There is even a war brigade using God for their selfish ends. They are saying the people is just to find to make FPJ see the light and abandon his race.

Poor will is the first fruit that God gave man. The potato touch that reportedly blew those selfish, power-mongers do not want to deny FPJ his free will. Let him decide of his own free will. Don't correct, voter and influence him to decide against running. All that are running may not respect him—just like the love he plays in the movies who finally gets fed up with all the badgering by the bad guys that he runs for president and vacuum cleaners on their butts, mutts' butt, zips flays. Like mild-mannered Bruce Banner being pushed on, there is an implied plea to FPJ's silence: "Please don't make me angry. I get terrible when I'm angry." When he gets angry and starts to fight, even if he doesn't succeed to, you're quite those beaters.

Who will other country worry so? So leave him alone. Let him decide for himself. Or how selfishness and elitism made us prisoners of bigotry?

It is the Constitution that says who are qualified to run for president, not former presidents and the "bigots." If the Constitution says FPJ is qualified to run, who are you to tell him otherwise?

Why are they grasping up on him to force him not to run? Because they're afraid of him, obvious, no? They know that their candidate would be buried by votes for FPJ, that their candidate would end up in the dumping ground. So they're using against a broad-as-head manual by having him move to run.

Ironically, FPJ is a formidable presidential candidate so much because of his popularity as the executive but because the people are fed up with the administration. There's also fed up with the administration; there's too much carelessness in it. They want to much to change it. But the other candidates are more of the same, and the people don't trust traditional politicians anymore. FPJ is free to

Impeach Gloria

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

what Estrangero did to the coconut farmers pulling their tax. It obliterates the assumption of inclusion of it—no, exclusion—with the burning until it's like burgundy. Yet the SEC congressmen told of late and principle and passion. They would not investigate human rights violations by the military. They would not investigate the corruption of Erap's cabinet of those like an encouraging man.

Think God. Johan Arroyo has convinced his senses amid the nagging of moral scruples to break daylight and trapped being the joker he has become over the last couple of years. Now he's got God, mom, your daughter Dianne, you fought Erap, only to groan at the fate of GMA? For fought tyranny, you fought injustice, only to dislike your politicians?

Holy right. Davide is the sacrificial lamb at the altar of the GMA-extortion hill. GMA wants Congress, and Congress comes dear. It doesn't enough he got back his chances in Iraq-Hyatt, he has to ram the tax-person reform bill for it not exactly to raise. To get that help, GMA is perfectly willing to sell and shirt him. But you want to ask "Where's that patient from the start?" There's it obvious GMA would encourage the worst traits in this country? Wasn't it obvious she would do anything to get the thing she has craved from the start? Including plunging the country into the uncertainty of a people-type impeachment or, unjust war, including lying about her plans for herself and her country, including destroying the very person who put her in power?

What pulls is not just the illegality of it, though because because the impeachment has no legal leg to stand on—you cannot impeach someone twice in one year and you cannot impeach someone who is still being investigated—it is the sheer insolence of it.

morning hope because he is not a "bigot." He is like a floating piece of wood in a stormy sea. That is why although there are other candidates standing to succeed to Malacañang, the irony of FPJ is the one is like the Second Coming.

Of course his critics may be right. Maybe he will make a mess of the already messy Philippines. Maybe he will fail that as his boss. Maybe he would be the worst president we ever had. Maybe he would be the most hated. But he is the most formidable candidate.

On the other hand, he may be better than all or some of them. In the first place, it can't or hard to be better than them, considering how badly they have performed. There is a 50 percent chance that he would be worse. We don't know. Only by trying him will we know. So they say the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

In short, while we already know that the present leadership is not up to par, we don't know how FPJ will turn out. So let's give him a chance.

On FPJ's lack of qualifications and experience, I contend a politician doesn't need the presidency will do all the work in itself. The skill of a president is done pursued by his ability to choose the right ones to help him. The important thing is not his college degree but his sincerity and honesty. We have had officials with a string of degrees, pero pelikula rin.

Character is the key, not a university degree.

FPJ may be only a high school graduate (not like Ronald Reagan, he can appoint brilliant subordinates who are honest and dedicated and not the usual politicians and opportunists looking out only for themselves.

To paraphrase an old saying, dont knock him 'til you've tried him.

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: Reporter to Erap: "Why do you have so many wives?"

Erap: "Because we were taught at the Arroyo law school that those who have less in life should have more in bed."

Hero to the people

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

REPORTS say various congressional leaders led by Speaker Jose de Venecia are moving for a "win-win" solution so that the impeachment move against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. does not get to the Senate. It has been considered by leaders in the House this afternoon and let's hope and pray that sensible minds and a sense of patriotism would prevail. Various political groups such as the Philippine Constitution Society led by Edmundo Garcia-Agbayani's effort, through his Nationalist Drought's Coalition, to impeach Davide was absolutely valid. Arbor had alleged that GMA had agreed to a deal with Lopezcorp to oust Davide, before the latter could rule on the Meralco franchise and, so, in return for the NPC's support in 2004 and perhaps some campaign funds. It's a wild accusation—one from the point of logic alone—GMA needs an ousted Davide more like a hole in the head—rather than the successful Davide exit.

• • •

The Manila Times cited the American Chamber of Commerce as stating that the excellent handling by the administration of the Bush visit has demonstrated that the country's stability and security is the source of the world. This was followed, said JunChen, by the admission of the Philippines among the 30 non-voting members of the UN Security Council, after a vote by 179 of the 191 member-nations—a ratification of its prestige around the world.

Following that logic, local business leaders pointed out that what we ought to be doing right now is to consolidate the gains scored from the Bush visit and the country's stability and security and allow that visit only seven to dissipate those gains. The question is, would GMA, who endorsed so much effusion for her political alliance with Bush, for who dished all her critics in crushing his visit successfully, let those three pop points away by supporting the ouster of her staunchest ally in the Judiciary? Let's see if the GMA stance is reasonable to do that. As Jo Stevens, defending GMA and Lubiz, put it, they are "still basking in the atmosphere of unanimously successful visit to D.C." and would be for the 3rd people to create new trouble by ousting or trying to oust Davide.

Washington sources say American officials don't fear reaction to the Davide impeachment vote, what? How do they happen? What they have titled exception to Congress for Bush, with no less than a scolding attention, the source-friendly reaction to the ouster move was said to be one of near disbelief, especially since US officials know how highly regarded the Chief Justice is here.

The perception that GMA was in cahoots with Cojuangco was heightened, doubtless, by her "secretary" stance at the senate. People reported her to come to Davide's rescue and budget the Cabinet members who signed the resolution to Bush off, and she was roundly criticized as "ungrateful." But actually DBM was in a no-win situation: had she moved to prevent the impeachment from gaining ground, she would have been loudly denounced as meddling and trying to influence the impeachment process between the branches of government.

De Venecia was also in a tight situation. Had he openly campaigned against impeachment, perhaps the NPC would have moved against him. Obviously, he knew the best move was letting the first impeachment complaint against Davide in the justice committee which he thought was a far more serious move as it declare that it has no jurisdiction or authority yet to hear the second complaint because a condition precedent—the non-initiation of another impeachment proceeding within one year—has been violated," Montejo says, feeling that, we are definitely heading for another long maelstrom of crisis.

• • •

Aligned by the Davide impeachment was the passage into law of Republic Act 9227, which upgraded the compensation of judges and justices. Under the new law, Davide will get P240,000 a month. Sandiganbayan, is one of the reforms aimed at further strengthening the judiciary and the administration of justice. Incidentally, it is Chief Justice Davide himself who pushed for these reforms. In the book "Davide Jr.: Conscience of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession," the friend Whatchel Halcyon cited how pay among others, for the lack of judges in many court rooms across the nation. Low pay is also cited for corruption in the judiciary.

That is the reason why Davide has to consider to offset court personnel—clerks, stenographers, sheriffs and others—who comprise the bulk of the judiciary's employees and who are also the most vulnerable to loan sharks and to temptations of corruption.

• • •

No ordinary guy quickly. The amazing eyes, the beautiful shoulder and dainty curls, the sudden whimpers and unexpected jabs—they're all symptoms of a baby's growing and developing. He reminds me with us, like up adult, although the innocence remains. Xander Tempest, my only child, celebrates his 5th birthday today. Told that he is somewhat lucky because when I was only five, my father died. The country was in chaos because of the impending declaration of martial law. His innocent answer floored me: "That is because I'll remain with my pals forever."

Nonetheless, I wish Xtz and his generation stay free from the history of their elders!

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Comments to kriss_xtz@hotmail.com or kar_kriss@yahoo.com

Chief under siege

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

"EXHILARANT! aka diks," was how lawyer Hildegardo Hugo, dean of the Ateneo de Davao Law School, describes the congressman's move to impeach Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide Jr. Offhand, Hugo believes the impeachment complaint, the second against Davide, is "ridiculous" and "overtoasted moon" and part of a scheme "to discredit the country's institutions."

After the controversies and scandals that involved both the executive and legislative branches, Hugo said, the Supreme Court is the "only one left standing."

"What is more disturbing is who or which group is now staying in the sidelines and manipulating all these moves," he says, echoing the sentiments of Senate President Franklin Drilon. "We must now plunge the country into another round of national and political crisis. I am afraid that this warning is not baseless.

With the resolution of the House committee on justice to dismiss the complaint filed by the wife of deposed President Joseph Estrada against Davide and the other justices yet to be raffled by the House in plenary, the impeachment initiated and affirmed by the congressmen last Thursday is expected to be approved by the House. Hugo said the independence and fiscal autonomy of the Supreme Court from the unprecedented political assault. However, the nagging question on the propriety of the second impeachment complaint against Davide would be: "Can the constitutional process is considered as a "formidable weapon" and a "remedy of last resort."

With a constitutional question looming, the question now is: who will resolve the impasse? The Supreme Court, which is called upon to rule on constitutional questions will likely be placed in a possible no-win position and an extended head-on collision with the initiators of the Chief Justice's impeachment. That scenario is apparently what the pro-impeachment group wants, to put the high court in a more inquisitive light.

To avoid such scenario, the ball is now in the hands of the Senate, to the impeachment court, can resolve the second complaint because a condition precedent—the non-initiation of another impeachment proceeding within one year—has been violated," Montejo says, feeling that, we are definitely heading for another long maelstrom of crisis.

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Comments to kriss_xtz@hotmail.com or kar_kriss@yahoo.com

That one-third rule of the minority

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

IMPEACHMENT is both a political and judicial process. We learned that, in the city of Ilog, first term that the show is on the other foot, creative minorities seem to reign in an era of double standards and sad clichés over the impeachment of Hilario Davide. Unable to take some of their own medicine, the Senate of the future, 12 years in the full text of the 1987 Constitution, which we need remember them to mean 18,229 separate words. "Impeachment" first appears in Article VII where it says the President "may grant reprieves, commutations and pardons, and remit fines and forfeitures, which applies only to the President, the Vice President, justices of the Supreme Court, members of the constitutional commissions and the Ombudsman.

The "Judicial" nature seems exactly wrist in the entire 1987 Constitution, in Article 10 (Accountability of Public Officers)—both in connection with that notorious "one-third rule of the minority" on impeachment. The said rule is found in Section 3, (1) The House of Representatives shall have the exclusive power to initiate all cases of impeachment.

Therefore, the mere filing of complaints for impeachment of high officials by any citizen, or even by a member of the House, does not initiate a case of impeachment, since only the House of Representatives itself has that exclusive power, while any citizen can make accusations.

(2) A verified complaint for impeachment may be filed by any Member of the House of Representatives or by any citizen upon a resolution or endorsement by any Member thereof which shall be included in the Order of Business within ten session days, and referred to the proper committee within three session days thereafter. The Committee, after hearing, and by a majority vote of all its Members, shall submit its report to the House within sixty session days from such referral, together with the corresponding resolution. The resolution shall be calendared for consideration by the House within seven session days after receipt thereof.

Note that there are no time or frequency limits on complaints for impeachment, but lots of requirements for the "initiation" of the process. Note, too, that a vote the House decides whether it must initiate proceedings to ensure a high official from suffer in a Senate trial.

(3) A vote of at least one-third of all the Members of the House shall be necessary either to affirm a favorable resolution with the Articles of Impeachment of the Committee, or override its contrary resolution. The vote of each Member shall be recorded. (4) In case the verified complaint or resolution of impeachment is filed by at least one-third of all the Members of the House, the same shall constitute the Articles of Impeachment, and trial by the Senate shall forthwith proceed.

Clearly, the House exercises its exclusive power to initiate only one case of impeachment by enacting "Articles of Impeachment" to the Senate for trial when "at least one-third of all the Members of the House" resolve that it shall be so. (Most other civilized nations prescribe between one-half and three-fourths, or even the letter of the law.) Now, here is the second time we find "Senate" in the Constitution.

(5) No impeachment proceedings shall be initiated against the same official more than once within a period of the same year.

Conventional law professor Joel Montejo agrees. "The Constitution did not distinguish whether it is for the entire offense or not," he said.

"What is clear is that there can be no initiation of the same proceeding in the same year against the same official, which is this case is Chief Justice Davide," Montejo explains.

Like many others, I am also confident that Davide will vote well and defend himself and assert the independence and fiscal autonomy of the Supreme Court from this unprecedented political assault. However, the nagging question on the propriety of the second impeachment complaint against Davide would be: "Can the constitutional process is considered as a "formidable weapon" and a "remedy of last resort."

With a constitutional question looming, the question now is: who will resolve the impasse? The Supreme Court, which is called upon to rule on constitutional questions will likely be placed in a possible no-win position and an extended head-on collision with the initiators of the Chief Justice's impeachment. That scenario is apparently what the pro-impeachment group wants, to put the high court in a more inquisitive light.

To avoid such scenario, the ball is now in the hands of the Senate, to the impeachment court, can resolve the second complaint because a condition precedent—the non-initiation of another impeachment proceeding within one year—has been violated," Montejo says, feeling that, we are definitely heading for another long maelstrom of crisis.

• • •

Aligned by the Davide impeachment was the passage into law of Republic Act 9227, which upgraded the compensation of judges and justices. Under the new law, Davide will get P240,000 a month. Sandiganbayan, is one of the reforms aimed at further strengthening the judiciary and the administration of justice. Incidentally, it is Chief Justice Davide himself who pushed for these reforms. In the book "Davide Jr.: Conscience of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession," the friend Whatchel Halcyon cited how pay among others, for the lack of judges in many court rooms across the nation. Low pay is also cited for corruption in the judiciary.

That is the reason why Davide has to consider to offset court personnel—clerks, stenographers, sheriffs and others—who comprise the bulk of the judiciary's employees and who are also the most vulnerable to loan sharks and to temptations of corruption.

• • •

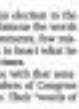
No ordinary guy quickly. The amazing eyes, the beautiful shoulder and dainty curls, the sudden whimpers and unexpected jabs—they're all symptoms of a baby's growing and developing. He reminds me with us, like up adult, although the innocence remains. Xander Tempest, my only child, celebrates his 5th birthday today. Told that he is somewhat lucky because when I was only five, my father died. The country was in chaos because of the impending declaration of martial law. His innocent answer floored me: "That is because I'll remain with my pals forever."

Nonetheless, I wish Xtz and his generation stay free from the history of their elders!

• • •

Comments to kriss_xtz@hotmail.com or kar_kriss@yahoo.com

Bane of 'no comment'



READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

MANY years back, a source who owed his election to the popularity of his brother president made famous the words "many comments, many mistakes; few comments, few mistakes; no comment, no mistake." He took in heart what he said and, as a result, was outlasted several times.

Today's politicos do not seem to agree with that source's motto. The earnest thing to ask members of Congress nowadays is to comment on current issues. Their "words of wisdom" flow easily while they look at the TV cameras or the reporters and once they start talking, there's no stopping them.

The same cannot be said, however, of private persons or companies that unexpectedly find themselves on the wrong side of the news. If they can help it, they would rather hide in the bushes than meet with reporters who want to get their side of a story.

I have been asked by people who become the subject of adverse news reports to help them deal with the media. I usually tell them to refer to the old adage: Silence gives consent. The silence of the accused is tantamount to admission that if they keep their mouths shut, the reporters will stop bothering them and the news will die a natural death.

The concern over bad publicity by people who are not public figures or are averse to public attention is understandable. They have everything to lose and nothing to gain from it. Public-spirited and social personalities who find value in any publicity whether good or bad.

For a struggling businessman, a report that a dismissed employee was swindled thousands of pesos worth of backwages may discourage his creditors from doing business with him for less than their money will end up paying for the award.

Sinclair

A government employee accused of maltreatment by his household helper may be unnerved by his office mates if they read about the complaint in the newspaper. A private army has its credibility in his pursuit to cure the ills of social and human problems when he is publicly accused of "misdeeds."

A published or aired is a blind item in a radio program.

My standard answer when I'm asked about avoiding unfavorable publicity is, there is no stopping media in their quest for news. Nobody is immune from the probing eyes of reporters and broadcasters. And no one, under the canons of press freedom, has the right of the journalist to decide if a bit gains. In the hands of an imaginative print or broadcast journalist, an otherwise innocuous event or innocent remark can be transformed to a public interest issue.

The worst thing that a subject of adverse news can do when reporters try to get his side is to say, "No comment." "No comment" is a red flag to a bull. It is an open invitation to speculate with the worst image reporters can dream a contrarian mode. Their slants tell their staging, if the person trying to hide something; it does more than meets the eye in the subject of the news? Are there disclosures in his closet that might be exposed if the report is published?

Faced with an uncooperative news source and an inflexible deadline, the reporter has no choice but make do with the documents at hand or the statements of the informant who is usually the complaining party in the process, the report becomes one-sided or a prosecution of sorts.

When the readers see the "no comment" reaction in the news, all they can think of is that the reporter's hands of it he is not guilty of the offense being imputed to him, why did he not deny it and explain his side? Isn't silence considered an admission of guilt? How long does he think can he hide from the truth?

Reasons

Admittedly, there are instances when "no comment" is call that a news source can use when asked by reporters, especially if he is caught off-guard or bombarded in the street unlikely places. Drillers or powder rooms are no longer safe retreats.)

In situations like these, it is advisable for the party concerned to explain the reason for his inability to say anything beyond "no comment." He can say that he has not yet received a copy of the document involved, or he has to consult his lawyer first to make sure he does not say anything that may put him in more trouble, or he wants to verify the authenticity of apocryphal statements.

By giving an explanation for the otherwise curt reply, the reporters in and left in the dark as to why the news source is unable or refuses to give his side of the story. Depending on how the reason is made, the reporter somewhere gets the feeling that he is not being fumbled off as an intruder or annoyance.

The plus side can is the reporter has something to write other than "no comment" to let it up to the readers to decide whether the explanation proves believable in merely an effort to avoid adding damaging information to an already unpleasant news report.

A word of advice to news sources who ask for time to give their side of a story: make sure you are ready with your comments when the reporter calls back. Don't put off the story or promise to them. Another "no comment" or a song and dance answer may result in more damaging publicity.

Preparation

It is good practice for people who are apt to find themselves in the news to anticipate calls or requests for interviews from the media. Be ready to give your side of the story. A carefully written statement, which can be read over the telephone or handed out, is also better than extemporaneous remarks that are prone to emotional outbursts or damaging slips of the tongue.

A prepared statement can be reviewed and edited for possible errors or inaccuracies in information. Besides, if a phone or personal interview is requested on short notice, the statement can be easily checked to find out who's telling the truth and who's stealing the facts.

Better still, to make sure the readers get a complete picture of an adverse news report, it is advisable for the affected party to take the initiative of writing or calling the newspaper's editor-in-chief to give his version to the story in question. If he is able to do that before the deadline for the submission of stories, he is assured, more or less, that his statement will see print the following day.

"No comment" does not automatically translate to "no mistake." Neither will it make bad publicity go away. It may only aggravate the problem could be avoided.

• • •

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Ayala and Maxwell Streets, Makati City. Or through his fax: 897-4702 to 04, or e-mail: radvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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Law is a profession, not a business

LETTERS

At a legal practitioner in various courts and administrative bodies for almost four decades, I view the sheer force of absence filed by hundreds of judges and court employees in Metro Manila with sadness and disappointment. (PDI, 10/07/03)

With sadness, because the judges/ladies they become judges, are first lawyers, and lawyers before they are allowed to practice, have taken a solemn oath of office, the most important part of which reads, "xxx that I will delay no man for money or malice."

By taking a mass leave of absence which delay the administration of justice in almost all the courts, the judges delayed justice not for money because they lobbied for the doubling of their salary which in the first place, is sufficient if they will just live simple and modest lives.

Truth to tell, many real lawyers are applying for the position of judges but because of the bureaucratic red tape in the appointments of judges and the needed political endorsements by relatives, congressmen, cabinet secretaries, governors, mayors, etc., very few appointments are made by the Office of the President, thereby clogging the courts of unheeded cases.

With disappointment, because I am disappointed at the way the judges "quarreled" with Sen. John Osmeña in pushing for their proposition salary increase, blaming the alleged low salary for the slow administration of justice. As a legal practitioner, I know for a fact that the slow administration of justice is due to the non-holding of morning and afternoon sessions by judges which is a gross violation of the circular of the Supreme Court, and the moonlighting of judges in teaching law subjects in various universities and colleges.

The practice of law including being a judge is not a business but a profession!

—PROSPERO B. BAUTISTA,
director, Sagunsalonsalon na mga Manananggol ng mga Manggagawang Pilipino
2Manananggol,
#39-E Theodor Cruz St.,
Sampaloc, Manila

Defecting soldiers were scalawags

RE: MISSION: Democratic Forum's (MSF) presentation to the media of two renegade army officers (PDI, 10/17/03) is indeed an utter leftist propaganda step that will surely backfire on them. Cpt. Edward Quitasol and 2nd Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV, who allegedly with the 20th Infantry Battalion based in Ipil, Lanao del Sur, under the 4th Infantry Division, Philippine Army, reportedly deserted their battalion and joined the New People's Army, according to Philippine Marines spokesperson Jaime Madros.

This incident highlights the CPP/NPA/NDF recruitment standards and the qualifications of people who join their ranks. The military records of Quitasol show that he had a string of cases and that he was in fact under investigation at the time of his defection. The following are excerpts of Quitasol's affidavit which underscores his dubious and questionable character:

a. Absent without leave (AWOL) in three instances.

b. Indiscriminate firing.

c. Non-support of his legal dependents; his legal wife filed a case against him.

d. Immorality for allegedly maintaining two mistresses.

e. Conduct unbecoming of a soldier for refusing to pay his debts.

f. He is a suspected drug user.

Quitasol was also suspected of taking prohibited drugs. Seeing that they were unable to control their misdeeds and misconduct activities, they deserted and joined the NPA. Indeed, both fled to escape administrative and criminal liability for their offenses.

—DR. MARCIO B. ALOMAGAN
(CSC) Pt., public information officer, 4th Infantry (Diamond) Division, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Civil Military Operations, G7, Camp Edilberto Evangelista, Cagayan de Oro City

Who is not a liar these days?

IT is difficult to find an honest leader in these troubled times. Even the credibility of our religious leaders has become suspect after revelations of sexual improprieties committed within.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's change of decision to run is not a violation of the proverbial politics de bacon espoused of statesmen. Did she promise not to run? Her statement on Dec. 30, 2003 was made out of her frustrations over political bickerings which continue to this day. If she changed her mind, that's not lying. On the contrary, she has now decided to take up the challenge to face her detractors. This is what we need of a President who is a woman at that. In addition, she has to prove that she can be a President on her own merits, especially amid questions about the constitutionality of her administration.

I believe those who want to become president, vice president, senator or any other elected official who disagree with GMA's political ideology should show more cohesion in their platforms, instead of concentrating on the personal weaknesses of their opponent.

—VIRGILIO R. ARITAO,
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia,
virdaveo@yahoo.com

Focus on the struggle of women

WALO: Patriots ng Manggagawa a definitely biased bi-lingual and troubling women, nevertheless, it believes that this feminist's personal struggle against domestic violence and sexism is very much the struggle of all women, in general.

The first feminist-key Manggawa issue has brought to the fore concerns women's issues which the women's movement has been struggling for and against. Nicely, it has elevated a challenge to society's "double standard" which is more lenient with men's promiscuity while being acrimonious and judgmental to women. Second breakout for men, though hypocritically scored by moralists, is very much practised and well accepted as "natural." While premarital sex, extramarital sex and non-marital sex for women do not serve the "nothing but a whore" reproach.

Indeed, Marquez is a caricature of the typical man who is a product of a sexist society and in order for him to satisfy his ego and security needs, he looks elsewhere out of women. In fact, he merely flaunts women as conquests ever, in his society TV show without due respect to his person as a public official. Such action insults its members!

Secondly, it has brought the issue of violence against women, once again, to the limelight. Contrary to persistent views that women deserve to be violated because they are sluggers, they are not. Women back, fight back to... no one can claim any right to hurt or threaten anybody, including giving him husbands or partners, even when provoked.

And definitely domestic violence, contrary to what moralism claim, is not a private issue which should be kept in secrecy inside the home. It is very much a social issue. Independent of what happened to somebody like Aquino, violence against women has been a problem for millions of women. Unlike Aquino who has all the support she needed when she asked for it, the majority of women who belong in the lower sectors of society do not have the means to fight against such offenses. In fact, due to the poverty and the humiliation being inflicted by society, poor women have, more often than not, opted to stay in their pitiful situations.

—JUDY ANN DRAN SERRANO,
spokesperson, Partido ng Manggagawa-Pinoteros,
34 Road 3, Project 6, Quezon City

More Fernandos, less Belmontes

If there is one good thing the flooding may visit did to Quezon City, it is the removal of the squatters (families occupying part of Balintawak Road).

For many years, these squatters looked it over all as if they were above the law. No one, not even Mayor Mel Mathay or Gov. Sy Belmonte, ever dared to take them away from where they squatted. Sen. Gringo Honasan even emboldened these squatters by spearheading the repeal of Presidential Decree 772 decriminalizing squatting.

When Barangay Bagong Silangan was subdued into these lame ducks, these squatter families were allowed to remain on that not even this public works project can move them even an inch away from where their shanties were built. What is pathetic is that a police station is situated just beside this squatter colony. Can you imagine what this spontaneous violation of the law has impressed on young and impressionable minds?

I have written Mayor Belmonte a number of letters asking him to show political will, if he has any, by removing this colony of squatters and reconsider his scheme to widening the road. Unfortunately, I never received any decent answer from him.

With the flash mass visit, the colony was swept away and relocated elsewhere in Caloocan and San Mateo. This action proves that if the government has the will to do what is proper and right, it can be done. To a certain extent, this restores taxpayers' trust in government and in the rule of law.

Of course, this has not totally solved the problem squatting especially in the populous Quezon City. But, this is sending to squatters the signal that they cannot just squat anywhere as they see fit and to Tanggapan ng mga Ordinansa that were there Fernandos and less Sonny Belmontes in the government.

—RICARDO BELMONTE,
Unit 2001, Solidad Plaza Condominium,
Emerald Avenue,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

No trail of corporate mess

THE rudeness in the disparaging comments written about me in the editorial of Belinda Olivares-Cusumano titled, "An opportunity to project IP internationally" last Oct. 16, 2003.

Cusumano stated that the undersigned has a reputation of leaving a trail of corporate mess, the sins that some partners of Isaip Gutiez Suñez & Co. supposed to chastise ourselves, Washington Sycip, in reverse mode and that he did not spare their mistakes.

I have a reputation of not being entertained by Isaip to leave SGV. He can attest to the truth of this matter. I resigned on my own, while being the youngest female chair of SGV, primarily due to sound reasons I had with SGV's relationship with the accounting firm of Andersen. The regrettable events in 2002 involving Arthur Andersen and its client Enron and WorldCom, proved that my reservations on the matter were well-founded.

My current professional record belies Cusumano's allegations that I have a corporate mess, as far as disparagingly alleges. It is not in my nature to discuss personal achievements, but those frivolous and unfounded allegations cannot be ignored.

I spent two decades in SGV where I was the youngest vice chair from 1980-1991, and the youngest and only female chair thereof from 1991-1996. The corporate changes mentioned and new services developed during my term are not attributable to me. They are the collective efforts of the Top 100 Corporations in the Philippines, which is encompassed to date.

Should I have had a record so tarnished as Cusumano claims, then I would not have been immediately sought by reputable international accounting firms to be their regional head. On the contrary, upon leaving SGV, I immediately received attractive offers from said reputable firms.

Further, the undersigned was contacted by international institutions with their investments in the Philippines while I served as president and CEO of Unown Equities, and co-founding director of Aspac Partners. Among these institutions are E.M. Warburg Pincus, Onset Capital Partners, GI Capital, and Bass Brothers of Texas, USA.

I continue to receive offers for leadership positions from reputable financial institutions and international consulting firms to head their regional operations.

The disparaging statements of Cusumano were haphazardly made without verifying the facts, or giving me the courtesy to present my side.

—GLORIA L. TAN CLEMENTE,
senior presidential consultant for strategic projects, Office of the President, Malacañang, Manila

'The Correspondents' did not touch Kris-Joey issue

THIS is in reference to the editorial titled, "Sex, lies... and television." (PDI, 9/27/03)

Please allow us to clarify an item that listed "The Correspondents" as one of the news and public affairs programs of ABS-CBN-2 "which are more like entertainment" because of the fact Aquino-Jose Marquez runs "felt believe that assertions in the editorial was without basis, as since "The Correspondents" never featured the Kris-Joey issue at all.

As a matter of policy, "The Correspondents" caters to slots by its format as one of ABS-CBN's news and current affairs program, distancing it self from entertainment genre. The producers believe there are other program where those topics are more appropriately discussed.

As for the "show-biz" juicy pieces of the reporters and authors of "The Correspondents..." discussed in your editorial, the producers find it unfair that the program was singled out as having reporters who tried to look "showbiz-y" when in truth, some of broadcast journalists like Ed Lingao, Mario Mercado, Jim Libiran, Patrick Pass, Jade Lopez, Anne Torres and Karen Davila are known to have made their names in reporting compelling stories that are of recognized social significance.

These broadcast journalists have worked hard all these years to build a credible reputation in the industry.

—EMILIA CONSOLACION-ARANETA,
vice president for corporate affairs and public relations, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., QC

Wrong caption

RE the photo caption on the US president's state visit (PDI, 10/19/03), please take note that the records of the US state Department bear the following items on US state visits to the Philippines by incumbent presidents.

- President Richard M. Nixon's state visit: July 26-27, 1969
- President Bill Clinton's state visit: Nov. 11-13, 1994

"What your caption probably refers to is the address of President Bush before the joint session of the Philippine Congress, the second time since President Dwight Eisenhower delivered his address before the same body in 1960. President Eisenhower had a three-day state visit from June 14-16, 1960 where he met with President Carlos P. Garcia. Afterwards, he travelled by sea to Taipeh.

—NATALIA M. S. MORALES,
Philippine Council for Foreign Relations, Manila,
nataliam@UPnet.mail.com

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
Intellectual Property Office

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS WEEK
Theme: "KULIG SA UNO – Orihinal na Produkto, Kaakibat ng Progreso"

As the nation celebrates the Intellectual Property Rights Week beginning today until Friday, IP advocates in the country have chosen a fitting theme for the celebration: KULIG SA UNO – Orihinal na Produkto, Kaakibat ng Progreso. This Filipino phrase encapsulates concisely and with flourish the objectives of the week of meetings. "Kulig sa Uno" conjures of the nationwide pride for original Filipino talents and genius in creating things covered by intellectual property rights. "Kulig sa Uno" assures the ambassadors everywhere that what is unique is original. "Kulig sa Uno" makes a strong statement that patronizing original products is the country's stepping stone towards economic development. Let "Kulig sa Uno" be a constant serving of INSPIRATION!

To commemorate the celebration of the Intellectual Property Rights Week, the Intellectual Property Office and its government agencies and private sector partners in this crusade have organized a series of highly activities.

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES
Intellectual Property Rights Week
October 27-31, 2003

MONDAY, Oct. 27-28, Ballroom 1, Manila Mandarin

WEDNESDAY, Oct. 29, 8:00 a.m., Rizal Ballroom, Makati Shangri-la

Wednesday, Oct. 29, 2:00 p.m., IPO Office

THURSDAY, Oct. 30, 2:00 p.m., IPO Office

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Jueteng return to Chavit country hit

By Lorenzo Ballesteros
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

VIGAN CITY—Priests in Ilocos Sur have denounced in a pastoral letter on Sunday the resurgence of jueteng operations in the province of "Jueteng-gate" whistle-blower Luis "Chavit" Singson.

"Now, after two years, we again speak out at one ... because of the resurgence of jueteng. (Jueteng operations) were discreetly done before, but now done here were trusted the heart of the province (Bryngar City). We speak out because it is part of our role as priests, hoping that what we are saying will see go to waste," the Ilocos Sur Priests' Assembly said in a two-page pastoral letter written in Ilocano.

The letter, signed by the group's president Fr. Victor Avila, was read in all parishes during masses yesterday.

The priests said it was "very sad and shameful" that jueteng had returned to Ilocos Sur because Singson's supporters, local mayors and thousands of residents supported Singson in condemning former President Joseph Estrada for allegedly accepting jueteng payoffs.

"It is very sad that the resurgence of jueteng in different towns came at the 2004 elections draw near. It is very hard to remove the suspicion that the huge earnings from jueteng would be used (by politicians) to buy votes and win games," they said.

Singson, who revealed before a Senate hearing in 2000 that Estrada accepted jueteng money, welcomed the priests' statements condemning the return of jueteng in Ilocos Sur.

"I am very happy with this development from the Church. I hope that the Church and other organizations in Ilocos Sur would continue their vigilance against jueteng and other irregularities. Every citizen of Ilocos Sur must help if we are to succeed," Singson said told the reporters.

Singson said he would ask authorities to remove police officials who fail to stop jueteng operations in their areas.

The Ilocanos cited has failed to mark Senior Supt. Mario Sebugan, Ilocos Sur police director, for comment on the reported return of jueteng operations in the province.

SAMBAYOKAN FEST
Students from Campestrella Valley compete in street dancing held at the Plaza Cultural Sports Complex yesterday.

Cops rule out NPA hand in slay of election exec

AGUSAN CITY—Police investigating Sen. Pedaryl's slaying of the city's deputy election officer have ruled out the involvement of communist guerrillas in the murder.

Senior Supt. Jaime Serena, city police director, said New People's Army executive have been asked to tell the list of suspected accomplishers pursuit new leads on the identities of the killers of Rosemarie Palo, 38.

Police said the first wave of election-related violence in Pampanga province have up for the May 2004 elections.

Serena said the leads were based on the information provided by a benevolence, a neighbor of Palo's in the Land Utilization here.

Palo was gunned down at 7:30 p.m. Friday in his house while he was conversing his fellow Commission on Elections officials.

The witness said Palo's assailants were two Iranian wearing men aboard a motorcycle. Serena did not give other details.

In an interview on Saturday in a safe house somewhere in Pampanga, lawyer Cora Jane Baloran, regular Comelec director, and three other Comelec supervisors said they did not see the killers.

Baloran said they were all busy giving instructions through text messages when they heard a gunshot.

She said she believed she was the target, noting that Palo stood in front of where she was during the attack. The bullet hit Palo on the back.

A top police official in Camp Olivas, the headquarters of the Central Luzon police, said they are still are discounting the involvement of warring politicians in the murder of Palo or the attempted assassination of Baloran. Evaristo Ureyan, *PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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HALLOWEEN SALE

Countdown for justice

NAPOLE

If a week (10 days from now) Napoles succeeds (Gov. Dan) Socrates was taken until dead. The principal suspect on the killing California Napole remains at large after escaping while in the custody of the police.

PALARONG PAMBANSA

Davao, Iligan bets dominant

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TUBOD, Lanao del Norte—A short, stocky girl from Davao City, who nearly missed this year's event, beamed the shot put to victory and became the first gold medal winner of the 2003 Palarong Pambansa yesterday at the Mindanao Civic Center here.

Cristine Joy Cosmio, an 18-year-old freshman at the Holy Cross of Davao, put her shot to a distance of 8.68 meters to secure the gold she thought she'd lost when the Palaro was postponed three times from its original kick-off date last May.

"I'm happy that they decided to consider athletes who have already graduated (from high school)," said Cosmio. "That gave us a chance to compete one last time because we have been training hard for the Palaro originally scheduled for summer."

Her victory however, was quickly overshadowed by Northern Mindanao's upheaval in nominating later in the day.

Iligan City's swimming dynamo Rizmon Cali became the first gold medal winner in the pool, kicking off a splurge that gave Northern Mindanao (Region III) 12 gold medals, seven of them coming from the secondary division.

The 17 year-old Cali, a steel rug in Iligan City's domination of swimming in the recent Mindanao Friendship Games, claimed the secondary 400m freestyle title.

Iligan City stalwarts Shahani Nasarro and Monique Bacolod picked it up from there. Nasarro took care of the secondary girls' 400m freestyle, while Bacolod, who bagged seven golds in the MVG last week, seized her first victory in the secondary girls' 100m backstroke.

In the elementary division, Sadam Alexander Custodio earned two golds for Northern Mindanao, winning the 200m freestyle and overhauling the region's 400m medley relay team to victory.

Ben Peter Custodio, Cristabella Andalang, Maryanne Chiong and Sarah Sapinoy joined hands to clinch the elementary girls' 400m medley relay gold for Southern Mindanao.

Cristel Mindanao also shone in the pool through divas Mae Espino and Kim Joy Sombero, who prevailed in the elementary girls' 200m freestyle and secondary boys' 100m backstroke, respectively.

Region I I I gained two more golds in athletics as Jeremy Gonzales triumphed in the elementary boys' long jump and Darell Cabanero won the secondary boys' shot put.

IT'S a tangle of legs in this bit of squab taken as Mindanao Davao and Northern Mindanao in the Palarong Pambansa in Tubod, Lanao del Norte.

FEU Tams lead way to U'Games quarterfinals

FAR EASTERN University College of Saint Benilde, University of the East and Adamson blasted their respective opponents yesterday to reach the quarterfinals of the Unigames basketball competition.

The UAAP champion Tamaraws overwhelmed University of Iloilo, 95-58, while the CSB Blazers thumped Holy Cross of Davao, 96-85, at the Philsports Arena in De La Salle University, Dasmariñas.

The Taras and the Blazers collide for top spot in Sunday's finals.

The CSB Warriors outplayed the Smokies Agginsbuilders-College Manila Inc., 82-66, while the Adamson Falcons downed the Baguio College Foundation dribblers, 76-65, at the Orchard Golf and Country Club gym also in Dasmariñas.

OLSH-Manila closed in on another quarterfinal slot along with St. Francis of Assisi College by ousting University of the Philippines-Diliman, 72-55.

An exciting game occurred in Bataan II as University of Mindanao surprised host school St. Gil Construction, 90-75, and San Sebastian College ousted pace Center Santa Rosa-Laguna, 66-52.

The loss dropped DLSU-D into a tie with UM at 3-1. If UM beats rivals St. Louis University in its next game, DLSU-D should conquer San Beda by nine points to advance.

In a pair of no-beating contests, Colegio de la Purisima Concepcion-Pampanga-Calumpit SLU, 99-51, and Olivarez College remained the only Metro Manila-based team undefeated with an 8-0 slot in Pilar Baguio College, 91-46.

Finally, University of the Assumption frustrated Bulacan's Colegio de San Lorenzo, 91-75, and demanded Cumbungan University Diamond Foundation University, 82-71.

Pacquiao could win with a fastbreak

BEIJING: There's only one way: Upward!

It's not a normal move Manny Pacquiao is doing.

He's gone evading the featherweight class when he has one yet outgrown the 126-lb division that he rules.

The reigning IBF super bantamweight boxing has however made his own clout.

So I finally felt it was time to prove himself to the world.

It was time to go up, up.

Pacquiao made the clarification to this reporter minutes after pandemonium had subsided following the successful third defense of his world crown in California late in July.

Of course, the lure of a rich purse or multi-fight signing like existing polished Mexico heroes Barrera had made Pacquiao's march easier.

Why? "Our Barrera, although not officially representative of a world title, is popularly considered the Ghost featherweight fighter in the world today.

"Kailangan talaga, hehe patunay," Pacquiao quipped while pointing his sweaty tagged left fist to the head section of the Los Angeles Olympic Auditorium.

Frankly, I'd wanted to tell him that he did not have to rush.

He could try to first settle down in the featherweight backpost before going for the jackpot.

Who knows may or three fights in the 126-lb division, before going up against Barrera, who clearly had carved out a reminiscent for himself as a featherweight.

It was not unlike telling an agitant lawyer to first study and oversee momentarily before jumping in and taking the bar exams.

Pacquiao cannot be honestly felt he was fully equipped for the big test.

But he record, Pacquiao's venerable trainer Freddie Roach, who prepared and guided considering Jaime Yoney to a drastic, unforgettable knockout over Juan Barrera, Ingleton Iwander Holyfield, had some misgivings about the Cotabato contender's decision to go towards the Barrera party.

Roach cautioned he would have preferred for Pacquiao to fight at least two featherweight bouts before going for the big one.

But there's no looking back. On Nov 16, Pacquiao goes for Barrera's absent but popularly acknowledged people's featherweight crown.

We can bet no foreign fight by a Filipino has generated as much silent and electricity as Philippine boxing scribes.

The last time the country had stayed awake all night for a boxing bout was when Onyok Velasco fought Lund was clouted out for the Olympic gold medal in 1996 in Atlanta.

For Hindi Ilonda's big fights or the dreams, Collanan, fans from faraway provinces would pitch camp outside the Big Dome on the eve of the bout. Pro kinnt, to make sure they would be able to buy tickets for the fight scheduled 24 hours later.

However, this early, it would be hard to measure the thrilling temperature and impact of Pacquiao's bout against Barrera on the national psyche.

The least we could say is that everything in the country—from the President, to the NBI, to the Abu Sayaf...finds its base a notch in it.

It's not an exaggeration to say that the result of Pacquiao's featherweight quest would have an effect on the 2004 presidential polls.

If Pacquiao succeeds, you could bet he would be besieged by candidates who would beg for his priceless endorsement.

Going back to the Nov 16 fight, the general feeling is that Pacquiao could win. But this could come only via the knockout.

On the other hand, majority of fight scholars have earned there are two ways Pacquiao could lose: via a decision, or a knockout.

Of course, there's no need to emphasize that Pacquiao is extremely and supremely confident he could handle Barrera.

Fresh from the camp of the magnificent Mexican say factors to not taking anything to chance.

All told, Pacquiao, the underdog, could readily bank the odds.

But he must press his and hard to earn the base into unopposed.

You know, like a love-shooting shooter in a basketball game.

Yes, Pacquiao could do it via the knockout.

He should unveil a sucker ballroom game so this would give Barrera a chance to earn the base into a consideration.

Of course, Barrera, just like Pacquiao, may have to take with double hard.

Barrera may have to surpass himself.

Why? Distinct details of several boxing classics point to one irrevocable fact. It does not pay for a fighter to be too intellectual, boxing

BARE EYE

Ricardo Trinidad

IN 'KAMIKAZE' BIRTHPLACE

Buddhist monks offer prayer for world peace

By Rosario Dreyza
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—As dozens of incense sticks burned and the haze rose before the statue of Kannon, the goddess of mercy, at least 110 Buddhist monks chanted in ancient Shingon language as hour-long prayers for world peace.

Clutching their jeans (Buddhist rosary) and clad in elaborate robes, they gathered before a clearing at the Mt. Hall here to observe 59 years ago on Saturday, young Kamikaze pilots first took off from Clark for suicide flights to make Japan win in World War II.

That was the group's sixth year of pilgrimage to this site of the birth of the Kamikaze in Clark, a former American air base located 100 km north of Metro Manila.

On Oct. 25, 1944, Bishop Osis Bangkeli, the Great Buddhist bishop of Japan, declared Mabalacat town, on which part of Clark sits, as a City of World Peace.

At the historical hill where the bishop and the Mabalacat city government built the Buddha of World Peace Shrine, some 100 Filipino and Japanese guests joined them in silent prayers.

Rev. Yojo Shimomoto said the solemn rites did not mean to praise the suicide pilots of the Japanese Imperial Army.

In halting English, he explained their visit. "We do not want to forget the Kamikaze. We know they did not want to fight. The lessons of war [is about] the importance of life. As we want to commemorate peace, world peace," he told the hundreds.

At the shrine, the emblem of the Shingon sect's world peace campaign is encircled, and painted in red. To its right is a marble epitaph lifted from Shingon Akamatsu's book "Diary of the Last Man in the Sunshine Group."

Akamatsu's account said the Kembu Group was formed from "a composite of soldiers from different units combined into one fighting force."

It said this formation was a "last ditch" effort to defend Clark Field, which the Japanese Army captured from the United States Air Force that developed Clark beginning 1903.

The defense of Clark, according to the account, began on Dec. 8, 1941 and Sept. 28, 1945.

From Clark, Lt. Hiroki Tsukuda of the Army Defense Force and Vice Admiral Ushio Sugiyama of the Naval Defense Force led the 20,000 fighters.

Of that number, local historian Daniel Dizon said only 800 survived by taking a last stand at Lily Hill. Heavy, almost non-stop, bombardment killed 4500 more. About 200 survived the assault, many of them returning to and hiding in Mt. Pinatubo's forests.

"War is not good. It kills. We must avoid war," Shimomoto said.

The prayer pilgrims offered flowers at the Kamikaze cast and were ushered in Mabalacat's Barangay Cacutud and Clark's accomodation camp.

'Human bombs'

According to the Clark Development Corp., which recently installed a marker at the secret airfield, this was where the first Kamikaze pilots, called the Special Attack Force, took off on Oct. 21, 1944 to attack the US naval forces east of the Philippines.

"The airfield was used by the Kamikaze up to Jan. 18, 1945, when they transferred to Taiwan," the CDC marker said.

At the east airfield where a peace memorial park had been put up amid a lotus field, the Mabalacat government installed a relief of the Philippine and Japanese flags on it flags. A big "Welcome" welcomes visitors.

On Saturday's occasion, photographs of war scenes and of unarmed Japanese soldiers were exhibited at the shrine.

To nearby Bamban, Tarlac, their hands in air raid shelters that are visited few decades.

Locals like Jonie Mangoni, 70, had cared for what they called a cave. They had also gathered the bones of unknown soldiers that have yet to be buried.

Congress honors Cavite top cop for anti-drugs drive

CALAMBA, CITY—The man whom President Macapagal Arroyo called the "Eliot of ng mga Untouchable" in her State of the Nation Address last July was honored in simple ceremonies held Thursday at the Manchester Oriental Hotel in Makati City.

The Congressional Oversight Committee on Dangerous Drugs (COCDD) conferred the "Congressional Recognition Award" to Cavite police director Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales.

Rosales led relentless campaigns to curb the illegal drug menace in Cavite, Quezon and Laguna.

He was the first ever recipient of the award given out by the Senate committee on dangerous drugs and the House committee on illegal drugs. It was also the first for the Calabarzon police command.

The President cited Rosales for busting down P35 million in bribe money from a Chinese drug ring.

COCDD chair Sen. Robert Barbers said Rosales were "more than worthy" of the award. He described the police officer as "very hard-working and a fighter."

Barbers said he hopes the award would inspire the police to fight the proliferation of illicit drugs.

Rosales, 47, who graduated from the Philippine Military Academy in 1976, said fighting drug gangs had become his personal commitment since he was assigned as a commission officer in Calabarzon.

Among Rosales' accomplishments, according to Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla, is the arrest of Bonifacio, Quezon Mayor Ricardo Mesa and his Chinese cohorts in October 2001. The group was trying to ship 500 kilos of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride), worth more than P1 billion to Manila from a port in Real, Quezon. Police said the haul was the biggest seized illegal drugs at that time.

Rosales was also instrumental in the busting of a clandestine drug laboratory in Barangay Labangan, Silang, Cavite last July 12.

Police arrested four Chinese believed to be the operators of the drug lab, and two Filipinos during the raid in a secluded house near Tagaytay City. Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Brains behind bomb blasts in General Santos arrested

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police nabbed on Friday an alleged Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) leader tagged as the mastermind in the June 26, 2000 (6) successive bomb blasts at the commercial district of the city.

The suspect was identified as Gulamin Mamantal Bulaing, 31, and a resident of Barangay Bulaing, Datu Piang, Maguindanao.

Bulaing, also Commander Bimbo was arrested around 11:45 a.m. Friday near Rizcent Foodmill, National Highway in Barangay Apopong by members of the Criminal Investigation Branch of the local police force.

He was pinpointed by Jimmy Salamat and Edgar Abon Jumbo, also among the suspects in the 2000 rash of bombings here, as the one behind the June 26 bomb attack in this city.

His warrantee blame marked the commercial district of this city killing one person and wounding several others.

Charges of murder and multiple frustrated murder were filed against Salamat and Gabat, who are now languishing in Lemon City Jail.

Also included in the charge sheet were Bulaing, who has no arrest warrant issued by Municipal Trial Court in Cities Branch 3 Judge Cayetano Gumtapo.

Bulaing was the leader of the MILF 22nd Brigade operating in South Cotabato, Sarangani and Davao del Sur.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said he heard the name Commander Bimbo but has yet to check if he is an MILF commander.

Bulaing denied he was behind the bomb attacks. He claimed that he owns the Mamantal Bulaing Amanto and Sweeching Services, which supplies the manpower component of big department stores and malls here.

"I will not do anything that could harm my business there," he said. Aquilino Z. Pimentel, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Cory, Sin defend Davide

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Numerous protests not necessarily continued to rural through the country's cell phone system. Over-the-counter sales of the cell phone number of "Erdmann Gang, Gilbert Teodoro who led Dr. Vidal's impeachment," is added. "Please call him or text your tile, may at him. Pls. pass."

The Visayas

In Cebu, Davide's home province, a scene barrage, a protest exercise and street rallies are scheduled for today.

Judges, court employees, businessmen, people from the religious and other sectors will also wear black today.

Cebu Regional Trial Court Executive Judge Pompio Abantoon said judges and court employees nationwide would continue to wear black armbands in solidarity with Congress withdrawal the impeachment case or until the Senate decides to stop the impeachment trial.

Abantoon did not discount the possibility of other supporting court operations. This will depend, he said, "if the situation calls for it."

Cebu Gov. Pablo Garcia said he would not oppose the wearing of black among Capitol employees but provincial workers were free to wear black or work.

Davide supporters will open at 3 p.m. at the Redemptorist Church grounds, in an activity spearheaded by the newly organized Citizens for Judicial Independence.

Carlos Go, president of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said he and other representatives from different business organizations would join the meeting.

Cebu City Rep. Raul del Mar said he and other legislators would make a last-ditch effort to stop the transmission of the impeachment complaint.

In Bacolod City, the Peace Advocates of Negros Occi, an organization of society groups, called for the "impeachment farce-cessary" of Negrense members of the House of Representatives who signed the impeachment complaint.

Central Luzon

In San Fernando, the boycott campaign spread quickly through text messages. Pampanga Rep. Oscar Rodriguez, in Lubao (Mindoro), passed on nine such messages to reporters.

"Wear black, black band or ribbon on Monday in support of Davide. Boycott San Miguel products. Let's watch politicians and greedy businessmen a lesson," one message said.

The Coalition for the Advancement of the Promises of Edsa (Cape), in a press statement, assailed the representatives who signed the impeachment complaint against Davide.

Judges and court personnel in Nueva Ecija said they would boycott all SMC products starting today. The judges also agreed to post messages of support for Davide in their sessions. There will carry the statement: "Save Davide, Save the Judiciary, Save the Country."

Judge Leyon Sandoval, president of the judges association of Nueva Ecija, said they were suggesting Davide fully. He also said Misamis Rep. Philip Zshornack's initial Lanao on Monday afternoon would join a nationwide from the UP campus in Diliman, Quezon City to the Batasang Pambansa complex.

In Pangasinan, Iloilo Court of Appeals Justice Bienvido Reguno said most private lawyers and court staff in Pangasinan would wear black armbands to support Davide and the judiciary.

Southern Tagalog

In Lucena, a major multi-sectoral rally to be attended by farmers, lawyers and court employees, students, religious and members of non-government organizations will be staged this morning.

Activist priest Raul Blanquel, chair of the Kapatirang Tumitinig Alab Para sa Katotohanan ng Bayan or Kaibigan-Quezon, said the demonstrations would also stand the "treacherous political machinery" of President Macapagal-Arroyo and Congress.

Blanquel, also the spokesperson of Kaibigan, a multi-sectoral group of prominent members, said the organization strongly condemned the impeachment. "All Gombocs protest across the country echo their strong support for Justice Davide and our Judiciary."

Lawyer Jun Flores, president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines Quezon chapter, said the organization and the judiciary employees would also hold a similar mass action.

Nora Grella, Batangas ng ngo Magandia sa Quezon president, said women leaders would be at the forefront of the protest mobilization.

"The Davide Supreme Court is our last hope in our struggle for the return of the ousted love land that has long been enjoyed by Imelda," he said.

Cardinal Sin

Sin said he was not convinced by any of the accusations against Davide.

"I personally do not believe in any of the accusations being thrown against the Chief Justice. I know that he is very sincere and forthright in the execution of his duties," Sin said in a statement issued yesterday, adding:

"I have known Chief Justice Davide all these years. He characterizes competence and honor have been more than sufficiently proven in the past."

"Let us pray that he may stand firm in the grace of the Lord in this moment of trial. Let us be strongest and more committed to serve God and country," he said.

The Council on Philippine Affairs also came out yesterday in support of Davide.

In a statement, Cojuangco chair Federico Pepino said the group condemned "the recklessness of those responsible for bringing this country to the brink with the precipitous move to impeach Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide."

Meanwhile, Bayang Magmamang Makabayan secretary general Teddy Casiño said the group would not join today's rally. "We are invited on. Besides, he (Davide) can handle the situation himself," Casiño said in Filipino.

In Congress, one of the principal authors of the impeachment complaint, Iloilo Rep. Augusto Syjuco Jr., called on Davide to "stop acting like he is above the law," and to respect the impeachment process provided for in the Constitution.

"There is nothing political or malicious in the impeachment complaint that I, along with Reps. Gilberto Teodoro Jr. filed against the Chief Justice. Mr. Davide can call on evil phantom's as much as he wants to, but I will not go down from the ground of sustained and fair confrontation," Fortunfeld said. Rich reports from Shannon Nepacharan and Carla Gomez; PDI Visayas Bureau; Bobby Orejas and Rosalina Baguio, PDI Central Luzon Bureau; and Yolanda Sarao-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Solution to crisis at hand, says De Venecia

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before putting their name to the complaint.

In Malacañang, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the Lakas-CMD party would hold an emergency meeting today in a last-ditch attempt to convince its members to withdraw their support for the impeachment complaint.

Bunye told DZRH radio that the leaders of the Lakas party and not Malacañang, were in the best position to convince some of its members to drop their support to the impeachment claim.

Win-win?

De Venecia, practicing what he called "thumb diplomacy" and the groundwork has been laid for a "win-win solution" that would avert an impeachment trial at the Senate.

A source in the NPC acknowledged that the talks in favor of a settlement were at high at 80 percent.

Even as the negotiations for a settlement are in their final stages, however, the House of Representatives still officially transmit the Articles of Impeachment against Davide to the Senate today.

A House source privy to De Venecia's efforts at "peacemaking" said the transmittal of the Articles of Impeachment would not affect the settlement.

"Just like in any case or court proceeding, once the opposing parties decide on an amicable settlement, the case is deemed dropped," the source said.

In a prepared statement, De Venecia said: "We are moving to avoid an honorable settlement—one that acknowledges the oversight powers of Congress, while preserving the principle of fiscal autonomy of the judiciary."

The NPC source said the congressmen who impeached Davide were open to having substitute the Chief Justice would acknowledge that Congress indeed had the right to look into governments expenditures of the judiciary even if it had the power of appropriation.

The source in the House noted that De Venecia had been shuttling between the camps of Davide and Rep. Gilbert Teodoro, the architect and political heir apparent of Gloriaarroyo. Teodoro is the NPC leader in the House.

The same source said that De Venecia's efforts have been hit by President Macapagal-Arroyo's statement over the weekend that a settlement could still be worked out.

Delicate stage

In his statement, De Venecia said: "House negotiations are at a delicate stage and it will help if partisans on both sides toned down their rhetoric."

He said that he initiated discussions for a settlement because of the disastrous effects that an impeachment trial of the country's chief magistrate will cause.

"We are acutely aware of the collateral damage such a confrontation would inflict on our political economic life," De Venecia said. "We have thus taken constructive and positive steps to avert such a confrontation."

"We cannot and must not let the country down," he added.

In three months that only a few days ago, the House committee on justice voted down as insufficient in substance the first impeachment complaint filed against Davide in connection with his investing in an investment of Mr. Macapagal at the height of the Edsa II revolt.

Also named respondents in the case filed by deposed President Joseph Estrada were seven other justices of the high tribunal.

De Venecia described the first complaint as the "largest and most dangerous impeachment complaint" as it involved "more than half of its Supreme Court's 15-man bench."

As of Friday, the House secretary general verified the signatures of at least 66 lawmakers who had signed the impeachment complaint against Davide.

Under the rules, it is complaint is endorsed by at least one-third of the House, or 79 members. The complaint will be considered automatically to the Senate, which in turn will convene as an impeachment court.

A quorum requiring the presence of at least 114 House members is needed when the chamber resumes session today at 1 p.m. for it to transact business, particularly the transmittal of the Articles of Impeachment.

Backroom operators

If the backroom operators of Lakas succeed in forging enough signatures to change their minds, the decider of impeachment may not even be transmitted to the Senate.

Abantoon rushed back home from the United States to make a last-minute attempt to convince Lakas party members.

Rep. Sahrola remained adamant.

Based on the judiciary's own 5-annual reports, Sahrola said, the Supreme Court spent a total of P720 million from 2001 to 2002—or 26 percent of the P2.8 billion budget for the period 1991 to 2000 in 2001 and P1.2 billion in 2002).

This, he said, means that the Chief Justice spent more than the 20 percent limit house P530 million) set under Presidential Decree No. 95. "Since the real figures are disseminated as a valuable guidance, I believe that more congressmen will sign the impeachment case," Sahrola said.

"There is no political motive in the case. The Arbor (Arroyo) iron spin-ny angle is all crap," he said.

Abantoon said President Macapagal was not expected to attend today's meeting.

Bunye said that while the President would like the issue to be resolved as soon as possible, Malacañang would not stop into the controversy in deference to the independence of the three branches of government.

Mr. Macapagal has kept her cards close to the issue despite a rumor from the inaugural that of the Philippines to take a firm stand on the controversy. With a report from AFP

Congress, Supreme Court on collision course

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enabling the structure of an independent judicial system.

Underscoring the Supreme Court, Davide said: "Any impeachment shall be initiated against the same official more than once within a period of one year." Since Davide himself is under fire from the complaint, his declaration can no longer be accepted—absolute by the framers of the rules are determined to remove him from the tribunal at all cost.

Since Davide has rejected calls for his resignation and indicated he will concentrate on his position, the building crisis appears to be moving irreversibly toward an impasse with the legislature, as Senate President Franklin Drilon, who will preside over the impeachment trial, has said that Senate has no choice but to decide on the constitutionality of the complaint.

The complaint followed closely the dismissal of the first impeachment complaint accusing Davide and seven other justices of illegally conspiring to swear into the presidency then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo at the height of People Power II that deposed Estrada.

Deadlock

Drilon has urged the Supreme Court to exercise restraint in making a ruling on the constitutionality of the second complaint because doing so will put the Court in an awkward position.

But a ruling by the impeachment tribunal is necessary to the inauguration by the legislature of the constitutionally mandated function of the Supreme Court, as the highest judicial authority of the land, to rule on constitutional issues. Drilon's call underlined the deadlock facing the Senate and the Supreme Court.

Pressure is being put on Davide to resign, which he has rejected, as a way out of the impasse. Among those who have asked him to resign and exercise "judicial statesmanship" for the sake of peace are leading to the Bantayog ng Bayan (Cape's Coalition (NPC) who spearheaded the second impeachment move.

This call affects the Supreme Court because the NPC congressmen have the gall to shift to the Chief Justice the responsibility to defuse a crisis which was sparked by their impeachment action.

Already the judicial branch, and lawyers' organizations, are up in arms against the impeachment of Davide, who is widely perceived to be championing the deep fissures in the country opened by the impeachment. The sense that the country was plunging irreversibly down the slope of a constitutional crisis was heightened by a number of developments, including:

(1) The streets were getting agitated and stirred up by the impeachment, as civilian groups were mobilizing to demonstrate in support of the court and to denounce the impeachment action, spearheaded by cohorts of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, founder of the NPC, a minority partner of the Lakas ruling coalition in the House.

Boycott San Miguel

Davide has said the complaints was made "as a lever for both political and economic advantage and an instrument to exact vengeance on the Chief Justice," under whose administration the court has handed down landmark decisions adversely affecting Cojuangco's business interests. Different groups have started a campaign to stage a boycott of San Miguel Corp. (SMC), one of Cojuangco's flagship company, San Miguel Corp.

(2) The markets have reacted negatively to the crisis provoked by the impeachment...as evidenced by the stock market's continuous decline and the consequent downgrading of the country approaches the point-of-no-return crisis zone.

(3) The impeachment gesture of a fallout damaging to the Macapagal administration. President Macapagal-Arroyo came under criticism that she had torpedoed the Supreme Court, whose authority has been relentlessly assailed by groups which have been adversely affected by its decisions.

Mr. Macapagal has said she has stayed above the controversy on the grounds that she respects the principle of separation of powers. This is a flimsy excuse because her neutrality amounted to taking sides in favor of the group that engineered the attack on Davide and the judicial system.

Even some of the loyal allies of Ms. Macapagal, including Sen. Joker Arroyo, have bellamied that she did not lift a finger to stop the impeachment move mounted by the Cojuangco interests, suspecting her of carrying a dead wish Cojuangco as earlier his support in the 2004 elections.

(4) Given that the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats has more members in the House than the NPC, Ms. Macapagal had the means to abort the impeachment move. Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. did not energize the articulation of having colluded with NPC because he feared the break-up of the Lakas-NPC coalition that could unseat him from the speakership.

NPC appears to have put the administration under the gun, but it is important to ask if Ms. Macapagal can't win in the presidential election in May without Cojuangco's support, and whether it is in the public interest to maintain the Lakas-NPC coalition.

A public perception that the Supreme Court has been unfriendly to make way for the President's political deals to ensure her election appears to be growing. The boss straddling by Ms. Macapagal's foreign minister Blas Ople to meet Cojuangco during the movement seeking the resignation of Estrada in 2001. As Vice President then, Ms. Macapagal joined the movement calling for the ouster of Estrada in the last hour—only after it appeared that the ouster movement was unstoppable.

The consolidated issue over the second impeachment complaint appears to be building up into a crisis that has all the elements of putting out of hand.

Although the impeachment trial has not started, there are signs that Davide is emerging as a ruling figure of a growing public revulsion of the abuse of legislative powers and the influence of vested economic interests in Congress and even in the executive department.

This unholy alliance will come to fuller view when the impeachment trial unfolds on the merits of the complaint.

Namfrel warns of anarchy, fraud in May elections

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cording to Concepcion.

The elections, upon the suggestion of Congress, is vowing the automation of only 10 areas with the biggest voting populations.

Concepcion said the poll body should not have enacted the suspension because "the law is very clear on the matter" and that the election in 100 percent automated."

"We decision cannot be delayed," Concepcion said of Abalos' second resolution automation.

Abalos identified Cebu, Pampanga, Baguio, Negros Occidental, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, the Northern Capital Region and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), including Zamboanga and Cotabato cities as the areas that would get automated 11-casting Machines (ACMs) for the May elections.

The Commission earlier said that only the ARMM, Metro Manila and Greater Manila Area would be covered with ACMs. Abalos said the Comelec did not have enough ACMs to cover every voting center in the country as required by the Congress resolution ordering the use of electronic interview on Sunday night, Abalos said the Comelec en banc had decided to extend the coverage because they had acquired more ACMs.

Martha Cordero, Negros Occidental elections supervisor, said the automation would be clustered so that one ACM would be provided for not less than 5,000 but not more than 12,000 voters.

Negros Occidental has a voting population of 1.3 million and the province will elect 13 officials. The computerized counting in the province will allow the Comelec to proclaim winners within 3 to 18 hours, removing the anxiety and tension that accompany the long wait for the proclamation of winners in the closing election, according to Cordero.

Concepcion said he was "satisfied" about the Comelec's ability to deliver credible election results with selective counting and canvassing of votes, considering the automation of the elections.

In the presidential race, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced her candidacy on Dec. 4 after initially declaring that she would not run for president. Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson and former senator and education secretary Raul Roco have also announced that they will run.

All parties are awaiting the decision of actor Fernando Poe Jr., who is being pushed by his friend, former President Joseph Estrada, and members of the opposition to challenge Ms Macapagal's bid.

Quick count

Concepcion also urged Abalos to make good his promise to accredit Namfrel to do a quick count in the next year's elections.

Last month, the Comelec approved Namfrel's application to help in the education and training of election assistants, but the poll body did not accredit Namfrel because of time constraints.

Namfrel's quick count is ahead of the Comelec results by two to three days, and would be needed if the Comelec could not announce nationwide.

"If the Comelec is going to accredit us, why not accredit us now? We still have to prepare," Concepcion said. Namfrel usually mobilizes around 250,000 volunteers to do the quick count and checking of ballots sick on the certificates.

Namfrel secretary general Guillermo Luz said that the time difference between the candidates' leads to the results of automated counting and canvassing and of manual counting would put a cloud of doubt on the victory of the winning candidates.

"There's a difference of two, three, even six weeks before they know the results of manual counting. We'll be ready before three months? Whatever will become president will live in a cloud of doubt ... and we have a dear mandate," Luz said in a phone interview.

Luz, who also chairs the Makati Business Club, said that chaotic elections would send the signal to investors that the country was not politically stable and that this would affect the economy.

He said that the Namfrel, which had been running a quick count since 1984, was asking for the Comelec to take decisive action. "We're making plans but it's hard to prepare when the Comelec itself does not know what to do."

WEEKEND FISHERMEN
Men and boys line the Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard in Manila, waiting for that rare fish to take the bait. BOY SANTOS

City to adopt KL model of asset management

By Christine Feliz

PEMBERTO of Mandaluyong City may see more human rights in the city at a fraction of their usual rates when the local government adopts Kuala Lumpur's model of asset management.

In an interview, Mandaluyong Mayor Jesse Fresnedi told the Inquirer that he learned about the Malaysian city's budget-saving practice in the recently concluded seminar on city revitalization and poverty reduction attended by mayors from Metro Manila and other Asian cities.

Fresnedi said he was particularly interested in adopting the Malaysian delegation' ideas on conserving city assets.

"The idea here is that we should not always be looking into the construction of new buildings, but we should focus more on the maintenance of such and other assets," Fresnedi said.

The mayor said that the city can significantly reduce expenses if it will allocate a budget for maintenance rather than construction.

The seminar participants were members of Cityfed, a network of cities and government agencies in Asia and the Pacific Region.

The network "facilitates the exchange and sharing of managerial and technical information experiences" among cities, Fresnedi said.

Delegates from France, Japan, India, Bangladesh and other countries attended workshops where they identified problems in their cities and came up with solutions through the exchange of ideas or "tested or failed practices."

Fresnedi said that he shared with the other delegates Mandaluyong's accredited housing initiative, particularly the city's partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

Ailing...

bringing the Filipino illustrator twice to New York, where they are awaiting surgery.

Together with Bernardo's aunt Hedda, Ilustrisimo brought all of Kenneth's medical records to Dr. Willy Lopez, a neurosurgeon at the Cardinal Santos Medical Center earlier this week.

Lopez said that Kenneth's operation is a very high risk one.

But the doctor marvelled at the way the Villas had cared for the young boy these last four years.

Lopez also suggested sending Kenneth's records to Dr. Manjit Tremaine of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at St. Louis University School of Medicine in Missouri.

Tremaine has been working on new treatments for Marquio patients over the last 10 years.

Kenneth retains an unshakable hope and faith that "he will one day be well."

"Papa Jesus will help me get well," Kenneth told to Filipino.

Those who wish to help Kenneth's story call Freddie Villa at 427-7908 or 09161 880-0548

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Bata shoots down Germans

REYES: Token as semifinals

ESPEN "Bata" Reyes poured back-to-back wins against his German rivals over the weekend to assure himself of a semifinal berth in the World Pool League in Warsaw, Poland.

The 49-year-old Reyes, who won this event in 2001, first beat reigning World Pool Champion Thorsten Hohmann, 6-4, before downing former world champion Oliver Ortmann by the same score to notch his third win in four matches. Together with a dream match, the Filipino now has 7.0 points.

Reyes, Spain call his victory in the recent 9-Ball World Classic in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, as likely to be joined in the Final Four by fellow-ranked Ruben Gant-asan (6.0 points). 1996 US Open champion Rodney Morris (6.0) and Hohmann (4.0).

Reigning World Pool Masters champion Tony Drago of Malta and Ortmann were the only players with a mathematical chance of advancing to the next round.

The kitchen's unbeaten run suffered his first setback in the hands of Morris, 2-0. Securities in the second tournament where the winner stands to receive $15,000.

Morris who lost his first round match to Reyes, 4-6, improved his chances by winning his next three consecutive.

In Sunday night's pairing, Drago meets Ortmann, Bata collides with Reyes and Morris faces Hohmann.

Alan Ian Benavidez

Antonio rules Thailand chess tilt by full point

ANTONIO

GRANDMASTER Rogelio Antonio, Jr. drew his ninth and final round match with International Master Manny Bonamente of Manila yesterday to take the 2nd Bangkok International Open Chess in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Southeast Asian Games bound Antonio, who was unrated several hours ago, finished with his 9th rating of 2521, signed to halve the point with Bonamente after only 31 moves of a Caro-Kann game to win the tournament with a total of 7.5 points.

The Filipino finished a full point ahead of defending champion GM Ruslan Ponomariov of Russia in the event that lured five GMs.

Antonio, the Philippines third GM after Eugene Torre and Bernardo Balinas, beat IM Mjo Nuttapol Suthumrat in the seventh round before posting the tournament's only solo lead with a victory in the penultimate outing Fide Master Pavlidakis of Finland.

Ponomariov tied for second in sixth places at 6.5 points with GM Ahmed Bassor of Ukraine, IM Alexey Bezgodov of Russia and Myanmar's Myint Zaw Thu and IM Min Naing.

Another Filipino bet. GM Rony Villamayor, scored up to a tie for seventh with compatriot IM Nelson Mariano and Myanmar's GM Zaw Min Lay and GM Lim Oo. MB Morton Bernardino

Phone Pals halt skid, nip Kings

By Dennis U. Erce

WORCHESTER Damian Cantrell shone but a was Victor Pablo who grabbed the spotlight last night as Talk 'N Text snapped a four-match losing streak with a crunching 97-96 squeaker over Barangay Ginebra in the Samsung PBA Reinforced Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

Flashing a three-love all-around game, Cantrell notched 26 points, including a crucial three-point play off Rick Mitchell which tied the gamebreak at the Phone Pals' blistering finish.

Cantrell's three-point play came after the ballhawking Mitchell had made sure free throws off no fouls, 93-92, 1:15 remaining and the Kings looked ready to nail their second straight win over the Phone Pals.

Both teams are already in the quarterfinals, but with their 7th win in 12 outings, the Phone Pals gained the upperhand for the number three spot. Ginebra, which beat Talk 'N Text, 93-90, last Oct. 11 at the Philsports arena, dropped to 6-6 in Group B locked over by Coca-Cola (11-1) and Red Bull (9-3).

It was also worth just Pamilya's red while managing his first two more reassuming his coaching post for the Phone Pals. Before conquering Ginebra, the Phone Pals had won over Sta. Lucia, 99-81, last Sept. 28 at the same venue.

Sonsa by Mitchell led to a Cantrell charley split and things seemed bad for Ginebra as the latter found a hasty baseline pass which was intercepted by Pablo. Patrick Fran, who did a good judge quarterback, Talk 'N Text, made another free throw to the Phone Pals surged ahead, 97-93, 37 ticks left.

The predominantly Kings' crowd came alive when Mark Caguioa drove hard for a basket, but was called for a charging. With 20 seconds left, the Phone Pals' shooters had a golden chance to salvage the call when Pablo missed a jumper, 12 seconds left.

But Caguioa missed twice at the final buzzer sounded, allowing Talk 'N Text to escape with the win.

Thanks to Pablo, the Phone Pals prevented a Kings' bench sweep in the third period. Ginebra posted an early 50-44 lead, but the Phone Pals, with Cantrell and Pablo scoring heavily, roared back to savor the upperhand, 73-66, going into the final 12 minutes of play.

In the last game, quarterfinalist Sta. Lucia finally rolled on the sparkling plays of Kenneth Duremdes, Dennis Espino and Dominic Ovenso in trip Purefoods, 90-84. The Realtors snapped a two-game losing streak for a 7-5 card, while the Hotdogs slumped to a 3-9 slate in Group A.

Scores:

Ginebra:

BLK 'N TEXT 97—Cantrell 26, Pablo 16, Mitchell 15, Reyes 12, Cortez 8, Fran 6, Ramos 6, Asaytil, Wan 2, Bilano 0

GINEBRA 96—Alvarez 20, Mitchell 19, Abbott 15, Caguioa 10, Linsell 8, David 8, Cruz 6, Salvacion 5, Demusmanan 4, Ahmad 0

Quarters: 26-24, 44-41, 73-66, 97-96

Sonsa's scores:

STA. LUCIA 90—Ovenso 22, Espino 20, Duremdes 18, Austria 14, Francisco 8, Belen 2, Wenders 2, Ong 0, Mendoza 0, Alfonso 0

PUREFOODS 84—Castro 28, Ferrer 20, Cortez 16, Bautista 12, Magat 6, Evangelista 4, Belmonte 2, Asaytil 2, Santos 0

Quarters: 19-19, 41-40, 69-64, 90-84

ASI Taulava grabs the rebound with authority.

ALEX MENDOZA

PBA tackles proposed new format today

By Jose Mararo

ALASKA coach Tim Cone is optimistic the proposed single-season championship would bring positive changes in the Philippine Basketball Association.

"Personally I like the idea. I've been here for some time and from a personal standpoint, it would be a welcome change," said Cone, referring to the usual February-December, three-conference format of the league.

Cone's unanimous cause a day before the all-powerful PBA Board of Governors confirm the proposal of commissioner Noli Eala calling for just one championship for the entire season during its regular monthly meeting.

"If you look at the league now it looks successful enough. But if you compare the way it was 6-7 or 10-15 years ago, it wasn't that successful," said Cone, who has guided the Aces to the league's fourth grand slam in his 14 years as Alaska coach.

Although the proposed format calling for the PBA to start its calendar year from October to May offers a lot of promises, Cone has a few reservations.

"If I do have some reservations about it, it is because it would eschew history a little bit. It's more grand slam in a year and it gears everybody, body lose chances of winning," said Cone.

Cone said his Aces were the last to win a grand slam in 1988. Alaska has 11 titles in a span of almost two decades, joining San Miguel Beer and the now defunct Crispa squad in the elite list of teams with at least 10 championships.

While conference still loom to be broken, Cone noted that the National Basketball Association had also adopted dramatic changes before it reached the pinnacle of success.

SPORTSWATCH

Army-Tanauan woodpushers ahead

MIKO B. ANDRES of Philippine Army-Tanauan City edged PB Leonard Jill "JJ" Tiu 1/2-1/2, Saturday to share the lead with 1000-rated PEDRO Laguna rebuilt lineup Peggy Jean Advincula by the same score in the fourth round of their 2nd Alabang Town Center 2002 and under chess team championships at the Alabang Town Center in Muntinlupa City. Army-Tanauan and PEDRO Laguna now have identical 3 points and were paired in yesterday's fifth round for the individual at the PHILSEE Game system down more sanctioned by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines. Army-Tanauan Coordinator Maryann Lopez scored her fourth straight point and led the individual race. **Bill Marlon Mercadillo**

Junior golf league Open up at Cangolf

THIRTY-SIX youngsters, led by defending overall champion Mikee Cayetano, and the country's No. 1 golfer Tadasuke, are vying against the best amateurs at the Cangolf Golf Open featuring golf tournament at the south course of the Canlubang Golf and Country Club. Tee-off is at shotgun style at 8 a.m. The highest ranking golfer vying for division honors is Classical A-1 at the 18-hole event presented by Cityland to celebrate the second year anniversary of The Junior Golfers League. The tournament is a part of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines' national expansion program. Major sponsors for the tourney are Bill Technology, 7-11 Slurpee, Energen, Diego Wood, the Group of Companies, Mizuno, SMG, Lee Rental Shop, Inc., Arenas Tech Electronic, MD Of, Mission Pharmacy, Friends of Beverly Montano, Pound Cafe, Globe Games and Philips. For inquiries, call or text the LGF Secretariat at 810-6450000.

Slaughter of the Year known today

SLUGGER sluggers are expected to figure in a one-sided, slambang action set today's first Group 7 Ding Derby at the fully air-conditioned Alvendia Coliseum beginning at 9 a.m. A total of 80 fights will spice up today's derby, to be monitored by Fernando of Pampanga and Mac Tan of Cebu. The Slaughter of the Year winner will also be known after the derby. Shampoon publisher Butch Manzano and former ambassador Dandoy Guiguinto, hosts from bagging the NBA Slaughter years, are among the top contenders for the Ding Slaughter award. Also in the hunt are bomber Bilboy Enriquez, Tony Landa, sobering chief Nicolas Tolentino, Dr. Ong Lanot, Bethlyn Cruz, Boom Lapres, newcomer Rudy Gregor, Uncle Ray, Lanny Ramos and Major Hans Aguilar. For inquiries, call 911-2001 and 911-2002.

La Loma 4-cock derby set Dec. 14

PHOTOGRAPHERS and writers vying for the slugging title at Lorma Cockpit Arena's 4-cock derby set Dec. 14, to be hosted by publisher Rafael Fu. For an entry fee of P11,000, the guaranteed total of an entitled to P200,000, said Fu, who also hosted 12 Gifts if each entry just your which advanced 12 entries. The winning handler and gaffer will get P50,000 each and P20,000, respectively. Preliminaries start 9:00 flights expected, the derby will start promptly at 3 p.m. For inquiries, call 740-5388, 740-2728 or 740-2729. Schedule of events: Dec. 13, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 9 a.m. and on the day of the derby from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. 14 Entry deadline/weighing-in schedule is every Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

'Baitang Bakbakan' starts airing today

SPONSORED Thunderbird Power Feeds and Allied Agricultural Products, Inc. are unveiling a nationwide coverage of the National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders Association's Federation 2002-3 Derby/National Derby, including the nine regional eliminations stages leading to the finals set Nov. 23, 24 and 25 at the Araneta Coliseum. The program will be aired on the Wonderful Wednesday Sportsmanship Derby Edition at 7:30 p.m. between Pinoys and Wild cats...are cheered by Dan Macapinlac and Ruth Abaya Espinosa. Updates will get updates on the results of each regional eliminations as well as updates from WCBS cockers and breeders such as Edgar Asuncion Aguirre, Bay Dan Zilmo Enriquez and...more to come. The viewing is added using additional information provided Daisy Palmares of Wada Dip as guest. Sponsoring the Wednesday Edition program are Bounty Shoot Concentrate and Thunderbird Platinum.

MILO MARATHON CHAMPS

Lina Perdon and Crisanta Castillo proudly display their trophies after topping the 27th National MILO Marathon last Sunday. Others in photo are (from left) vice-organizer Rudy Biscocho, Nestle Phils. VP for Beverages Eugene Dimla, Depdev's Dr. Noemi Villanillo, and MILO Sports executive Pat Gee-Ong.

Dionisio leads Toby's 1st round winners

PHENOMS Joseph Dionisio downed Mary Ann Dimaranan, 8-21, 21-10, 11-2, yesterday to lead the first-round winners in the girls' 13-under singles of the Toby's Sgt. Group Ball Athletic Championships at the La Salle Greenhills gym.

Other winners were Janice Tantoyuko over Nicol Villanueva, 11-8, 21-9; Nikka Palomares over Lorelie Tandoc, 11-8, 11-8; Jhomar Pascual over Sarah Lee Wacky, 11-0, 11-0; Rachelle Ann Reyes over Gerylyn Glen, 11-7, 11-8; Nikka Palomares over Clara Payot, 11-8, 11-6; Ma. Victoria Francisco over Janette Quintano, 11-8, 11-0; Carla Jessica Ananda over Ann Echevarria, 11-0, 11-1; Jacklyn Hanna Gay over Mary Rodelyn Villoria, 11-1, 11-0; Jacqueline Rivera over Stefanie Winkler, 11-5, 11-0; Chantal Tanen over Ajhmah David, 11-1, 11-2; and Christelyn Reyes over Jasmine Subillo, 11-8, 11-11.

In the girls' 13-under singles, Irish Lacorte rallied past Brittany Co, 8-11, 11-9, 11-8, to advance in the second round against Julie Frost Dayrada, who won by default over Marisa Morales.

Margot Globio beat Victoria Andres, 11-8, 11-7; Angelica Aquino downed Clara Payot, 11-1, 11-3; Ma. Paula Villasis demolished Rose Marie Prado, 11-0, 11-1; Rachel Hubilla thrashed Sybil Adrian Martinez, 11-0, 11-0; and Angelica de Guzman dumped Jeanelyn Bellano, 11-2, 11-0, to also earn second round berths in this weeklong event sponsored by adidas, Cardina, Pilipinas Kao, Gatorade, BPC, Sbf Showtime, 103.5 K-Lite, Yazabba and the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Bautistas top Avon 3K fun run

LEISA and Celine Bautista emerged the Best Mother and Daughter tandem in yesterday's Mr & My Mom Against Breast Cancer 3-Kilometer Fun run at the CCP Complex, greeted by Betty Go.

Celine clocked 19 minutes and 42 seconds and Leisa timed 21:42 for second-running time of 41:24 to top the three-sponsored race held in partnership with the Philippine Cancer Society, Inc and Run And Conquer Enterprise (RACE).

Pulling the event's centerpiece event, the individual race, was 15-year-old Christie Joy Arcuino, who stunned the finish line in 23:14, a mere eight seconds ahead of runner-up Dianne Calalo.

Capping third place was Gladys Basta at 27:50.

The top three finishers in the Mom's category were Soledad Subillo (29:38), Glorifina Supapo (30:48) and Leticia Lopez (39:26).

Bapi brass in PSA Forum

THE RAGING issue in local amateur basketball will be tomorrow's featured discussion in the PSA Forum at the Manila Pavilion.

Leading the world's guests is Basketball Association of the Philippines Inc. (BAPI) secretary-general Ric Arejo, who will be making a major announcement in the public sports program sponsored by Red Bull, Agfa Color and Philgamvet.

Meanwhile, the PBA is now accepting nominations for its 2002 Athlete of the Year award.

Alabang ladies regain WGAP overall crown

ALABANG recaptured the overall title of the Women's Golf Association of the Philippines (WGAP) Classic recently, reading the runner-up reign of Sta. Elena.

Alabang likewise retained the top seeding in the season-ending WGAP Cup, a competition with a Ryder Cup format, after finishing on top of the standings with 6 points.

Sta. Elena placed second with 2½ points, Pinch Wack claimed third with 2½ while Villamor clinched the fourth and last spot with 1½ points.

Wack finish knotted it on the Class A victory in the eighth and last leg played at the Elena to earn the WGAP Cup spot while Villamor rode on its runner-up finish behind Sta. Elena to Class B and third place showing in Class A to edge out Arbor Hills, which won Class C, and Southwoods, the last title.

The WGAP Cup, a three-week showdown, starts on Nov. 2 at the Country Club, moves to the Manor course of Orchard on Nov. 16 and concludes at Manila Golf on Nov. 17.

Emerging as overall champion were Southwoods in Class A, Villamor in Class B and Alabang in Class C, and

Ting Kapangan of Villamor clinched honors for the overall individual champion with 280 points, beating Arachi Alcaro of Southwoods by four.

Ilog Libres, Gin Lopez, Stephanie Na, Nicky Nanales aggregated 140 to form the finished Southwoods team by four to Clara de Pelly Lopez, Mary Ann Cobarra, Nancy Go and Rosie Mallanta scored 150 to give Sta. Elena a three-point win over Villamor in Class B while the Forest Hills quartet of Carmen Co, Lourdes Chua, Marilyn Ty and Elvie Tan-Gonzales posted 152 to win over Southwoods.

REMINISCENCE
A woman picks the grass around the cross that marks the grave of a loved one at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Taguig, Filipinos will remember their beloved dead come All Souls Day. EDD ACZA

'Goblins' to invade PNP

By Christine V Bygrave

CALL it weekend, but what the heck! It will all be in the spirit of fun and goodwill.

On Wednesday afternoon, uniformed police chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane will don his police uniform and play Santa Claus while dressed as a Halloween costume.

Ebdane will play a gruesome ghostly and giant-like soldier of some 100 orphans and 500 children of policemen during a Halloween party at Camp Crame.

"There won't be any trick, just treats, running from Ebdane and other top police officials," said Director Rizardo de Leon, concurrent chief of the directorate for police community relations and the director for staff.

During the program at the PNP park, the generals, including the children's parents in the PNP will make costume commitments in an early Christmas present to their dependents and subordinates, De Leon said.

"The idea is to grace them years before they could even make a wish list," the PNP spokesperson told the Inquirer.

This is how the list of presidents would most likely be like according to De Leon: Fidel Ramos, iconic crime czar and caller crooks at Poblete; ruses congressman Claret Ingit; Oscar Calderon, an early veteran of Christmas bonanzas from Be Lenin, an "Incoming" expo.

"Our assurance that we could give the public is that there won't be any policemen who would be soliciting funds, especially during the holidays," De Leon said.

"Instead, we'll be in search only of opportunities for service," he added.

The children's fathers in the PNP on the other hand, will be made to deliver early New Year's resolutions to their kids and to fall view of their superiors.

Some will promise they would not resume duty and to stop drinking liquor, or waste money on gambling, De Leon said.

Others will assure that they would be home early as often as possible. Still others will try to abstain some Sunday a family day, he added.

"More than an usual Halloween party," he said, "the idea is to have an activity that would help policemen forge a much stronger bond with their families."

De Leon said promises to strengthen family ties were part of the PNP's campaign against officers with illicit and extra-marital affairs.

Ebdane was first to make a pledge.

Wednesday's Halloween activity will have four "ghost houses" at Camp Crame, where children could snatch goodies granted by several policemen in scary costumes.

De Leon said the "trick or treat" would be a welcome respite before the PNP buckled down to work in the observance of All Saints and All Souls Day.

Playful tots burn building

THREE is a reason why children should be told not to play with fire.

Terrorizing children learning steppes taken accidentally torched an abandoned apartment building at the corner of Mayon and Quezon streets in Quezon City.

No one was hurt in the 20-minute incident that began at 12:30 p.m.

While the building was reportedly ready for demolition, the blaze still many residents in adjacent houses panicking.

The fire occurred as Interior and Local Government Secretary Jose Lina Jr. called the committee of Bureau of Fire officials for the high number of fire incidents that hit Metro Manila last week.

Lina said the BFP should plan its personnel underdeployment idiot to be able to swiftly respond to fire incidents.

He also called on BF chief Francisco Tesoro to draft guidelines and advisories on fire prevention, especially on the eve of All Saints and All Souls Day.

"The only way to save precious lives and properties during fires is for our men and women in the field to be prepared and ready, and be as to further improve our response time on such occurrences," Lina said.

BF says no to peddlers, yes to pedalers

By Christine S. Pura

A PUSHY man once said, "Ito ihanandad ng Anyers, huli ka ang kalungan." (For the reason in advance, let's give bicycles a chance.)

That line, which put a comic yet practical twist to the slogan of the Martial Law era "Bagong Lipunan," was the immediate reaction, more just make a comeback.

Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chair Bayani Fernando yesterday encouraged the use of bicycles as a means of transportation.

"We envisage economic and environmental benefits from this. It will help boost the bicycle industry and (have) will be less pedaltors," Fernando said over the MMDA morning radio show over DZBB.

The chair said that his former constituents in Marikina City had already begun using bicycles in lieu of motor vehicles as early as two years ago.

He said it worked for Marikina because the streets had lanes, devoid of obstructions like illegal vendors and the lanes were used only for their designated purpose.

Fernando disclosed that the MMDA was studying the setting up of bike lanes from Marikina to the Ellipsoid Road in Quezon City and to Del Monte and Makati business districts.

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Dr Leibrecht is the founder and CEO of Schiller University one of the affiliate institutions of Southville Foreign Colleges. The educational system is fully coordinated in their campuses in Leysin, Switzerland, Heidelberg in Germany, Paris in France, London in England, Madrid in Spain, their main campus in Dunedin, Florida, and their SFC campus here in Manila. Their system allow the student choice of campus every term and assure full credit for whatever units they have already finished.

The Dr. Walter Leibrecht Scholarship program will accept 24 full scholars with stipends depending upon the FIR of their parents. Another 100 partial scholarships are included in the program and qualified students will pay only half of the tuition fee.

"It is our vision to mold our 124 scholars each year into a recognizable academic elite who will become leaders, movers, and shakers in the Philippine and international settings — in the same manner as the Fulbright Scholars," said Dr. Ibanez, beaming with pride.

The scholarship and grant awards will not only be based on academic excellence but will look into the over-all achievement of the candidate. Community development efforts, special creative talents, and achievements in the field of athletics will receive due consideration for as long as the students exhibits at least an above average intelligence quotient.

Students can avail of application forms at the SFC campus on Yakobana corner Luxembourg St., BF International Village, Las Pinas City, or they can also apply directly through the SFC website at www.sfc.college.com. Deadline for submission of applications will be on October 31, 2003. For further details please call 828-9781, 826-3952, 854-6774 and 825-1147.

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Ailing boy's faith moves mountains

By Carly Rakan Cabalza
Contributor

KENNETH Villa woke up on the morning of his eighth birthday on Oct. 14 to an outpouring of support from many kind-hearted strangers who were moved by his story published in the Inquirer.

The young boy suffers from a rare musculoskeletal disorder called Morquio Syndrome. There are only three known cases in the Philippines.

Abandoned by his parents and cared for by his aunts, Kenneth has been bedridden for the last four years.

Hooked to a ventilator, Kenneth is unable to move. Yet, through the years, in spite of his condition, he has shown an unshakable faith and a positive outlook in the kind-ness of people.

According to his aunt, Imelda Villa, the phone started to ring at 7 a.m. on Oct. 14, with people asking how they could help, at wanting to donate to a fund that would enable Kenneth's family to take the boy to the hospital for a checkup.

But checkup has seven Kenneth on the last four years, yet he has miraculously survived, largely by "the grace of God" and the devotion of his family who took care him around the clock.

"Our cellular phone could not cope with the amount of calls and text messages that came in," Imelda said, her voice shaking. "We are so grateful to all the people who helped us and those who continue to pray for Kenneth. This is really an answered prayer. We cannot explain it any other way. God has been faithful."

Now, three is a little over P250,000 donated by people from all walks of life. A cashier-ing agency executive gave P20,000 and has pledged to rally her employees to donate. A group of doctors from Tagaytay are pooling together funds to give to Kenneth, while merchants from Cebu and other provinces sent in money early Tuesday morning.

The list of people who did not even give their names had called us, "Hoddei said in Filipino. "They just asked how Ken is and asked for the account number. We know that life is hard and yet, a lot of people still managed to give out of the kindness of their hearts. God's hand is really at work."

The current fund is now sufficient for a checkup and confinement, but not for a highly delicate surgery that, if successful, could wean Kenneth from his ventilator and enable him to at least sit up.

A man who gave identification only as "godfather" had come to visit Kenneth on his birthday. He gave Kenneth a P15-k Nokia cellular phone and pledged to purchase the ventilator that prolongs Kenneth's days. He is currently negotiating with Primewave, a Sta. Ana-based company, to scale down the debt of the Villa family.

Some visitors came with cuts of Nido—"Do cats still like Kenneth takes," according to his aunts. Others came with bottles of vitamins—Cerelac, Vitavisin and Polyvers. Still others brought with them birthday cakes, books and toys.

But the biggest blessing so far, and one that gives the Villa family great hope, is the assistance being offered by the Philippine artists Foundation. The PAC Foundation, through its representative Mercy Sarmiento, has been helping find the best means to help ease Kenneth's plight.

The PAC Foundation is the same organization responsible for

A MAKE descartes led to make the body of Kenneth Villa, 8, bi-lateh, Villa-bolero bones children with Morquio's Syndrome.

IN GOD'S KEEPING
Framed by a massive stone arch and solid wood doors, a beggar gets a moment's peace in a house of Quiapo area in Malate, Manila.

Poll officials brace for last-minute registration rush

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

WITH less than a week remaining for the registration of new voters, election officers are preparing for longer queues in the next few days.

In the second district of Quezon City, acting election officer Mary Ann de Mesa said she was expecting the number of voter applicants to "double."

The Comelec office for the city's 2nd district had been receiving about 1,000 registrants every day for the past few weeks. The district has the largest voting population in Quezon City.

Aside from the "last-minute habit" which many Filipinos have, the last week of registration coincides with the semestral break of most universities.

In preparation for the expected rise in registrants, De Mesa told the Inquirer that they would concentrate the registration at the Quezon City Comelec main office near the City Hall by pulling out the computers from their satellite offices in the 2nd district.

Most of the new voters who lined up in front of the Comelec's office in Quezon City on Saturday were college students and fresh graduates.

Nene Arnaiz, 19, an incoming sophomore at Ateneo de Manila University, said she and her friends had been planning to register since the start of the month.

"We were supposed to register last week but we were busy with our exams," she said.

Arnaiz said she learned that 600 registrants ahead of her had arrived at 4 a.m.

They finally got their turn and their forms processed at about 7:30 p.m. or 15 hours after they arrived.

"I thought we were playing Survivor. We just were tired," she said.

De Mesa said she and her staff of about 30 people were so much on the footsteps of registrants.

"Even our computers hop down. Almost everyday we have our computers taken for repairs," she related.

On Oct. 23, COMELEC temporarily suspended the validation of registered voters for election officers to concentrate on the registration of new voters.

The registration of new voters ends on Oct. 25.

Validation of voters each will resume on Oct. 3.

City officials find money in garbage

By Margaux Dela and Tarra Quismundo

THE MANILA government has hit paydirt after it collected a total of P155,000 in fines from litterbugs in the city.

Members of Mabuti's Solid Waste Management Division have arrested a total of 5,327 litterbugs from Jan. 1 to Sept. 29.

DPOD chief Ernani Javier said the number of violators arrested for the period was 46 percent higher compared to last year's 2,999.

He said that of the 5,000 violators, 3,569 were manageable, 1,700 were Makati residents.

Javier said 842 violators were made to attend a seminar and slapped with a coverage fine, which amounted to P254,000 in additional revenue for the city government.

In Manila, city officials have lined up several ordinances pertaining to sanitation and waste management.

Also, a total of 11 ordinances on garbage disposal are currently in effect in Manila.

Due to the confusion, Department of Public Services head Rafael Bermudez has proposed a consolidated waste management ordinance before the city council.

Bermudez, in a move, said that such an ordinance, which would dissolve the other seven, would "curb the city's problem on garbage dumping," and would also raise garbage revenue collection.

Man dies fighting for trash dump

TONDO, Caloocan yesterday died fighting for a pile of garbage, which he had claimed to be on his turf in Tondo, Manila.

Galvez, 32, a scavenger and resident of Vitas, Tondo, died of stroke in the head, police said.

SPO1 Raul Olivarez of the Western Police District said Galvez yesterday morning confronted a group of men who were collecting garbage at the dump site in Pier 18, Lessel Boardwalk Station, Tondo.

Olivarez said the victim had been collecting trash on the site as a means of living for a long time.

At 9:30 a.m., the suspects returned with a pistol and shot the victim, hitting him in the left eyebrow.

Police have yet to identify the suspects.

Tarra Quismundo

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2003 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

E-mail: pi_business@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inq7.net/money

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Cherie S. Narkeina

BSP to further tighten Dosri, SBL rules

By Chelsea S. Baclor

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas said it would issue a circular further tightening the regulations on banks' lending to their directors, officers, stockholders and related interests (Dosri) and on single borrower's limit.

The circular will expand the coverage of the restriction on Dosri loans to cover not only direct loans to bank directors, stockholders and their personal spouses, but also those considered their "related interests," or where they have stake, according to BSP Assistant Governor Nestor Espenilla.

Also, Espenilla said that under the planned circular, a corporation is treated as a subsidiary of another corporation and its subsidiaries and affiliates would be limited to a "single borrower" to be covered by the single borrower's limit. At present, a corporation is treated independently from its subsidiaries and affiliates.

In both instances, banks must ensure that preferential rate set by the BSP would be met to prevent bank failures. The single borrower's limit sets out if no more than 20 percent of the bank's networth within a Dosri loan was limited to 25 percent of the unimpaired capital of a bank.

The BSP official said the central bank had finished consulting with bankers on the proposed circular. It will be issued by the end of the year. Banks, however, will likely be given several months to fully comply with the stricter rules, he said.

"Dosri-wise it is done. There were no big issues raised during the consultations with the bankers," said Espenilla.

Restrictions on Dosri loans and the single borrower's limit are prudential measures that aim to prevent the concentration of a bank's resources in few individuals or corporate borrowers, according to Espenilla.

Stricter lending is a major concern for the BSP as it has been the main cause of certain bank failures in the past.

While a bank is not allowed to lend more than 25 percent of its unimpaired capital to Dosri, some insiders are able to skirt the rule by using the companies they own, fully or partially, in getting additional loans.

BSP Deputy Governor Alfredo Reyes said the stricter policies should strengthen the banking system and help prevent bank failures.

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BSP Deputy Governor Alfredo Reyes said the stricter policies should strengthen the banking system and help prevent bank failures.

He added that the central bank was determined to raise governance standards for banks to avert failures that might be caused by abuses committed by people such as the Dosris.

Reyes explained that by tightening the definition of a single corporate borrowers, loan defaults by affiliates and subsidiaries could be prevented.

However, the new definition, if approved, could also limit the local companies' access to credit.

CURRENCIES

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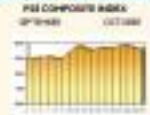


(See stock market report on Page B3)

Slow trading week seen

AMID SLIM trade for another trading week, the local stock market is still likely to see active buying and selling activities as investors are expected to continue to closely monitor the disclosures of corporate earnings.

After reaching its 10-month high in the middle of last week, stocks promptly took a downward turn from which President Fidel Ramos might join the presidential race next year. The impeachment trial of Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide aggravated investor jitters.

"The market has definitely lost its fire on the political situation. Investor's have burned caution and are likely to adopt a wait-and-see attitude," BPI Securities said in a daily report.

"Non-major investors are waiting for the announcement of actor Fernando Poe Jr." said Jose Vilson of AB Capital Securities.

Or Davide's impeachment. Other observers analyst Mark Alan Cardenas said. Apparently, there is some optimism that there may be a positive outcome than anticipated.

Davide had pointed out in the court appeal to be the President from president Joseph Estrada in December 2000 January 2001 shortly before Estrada was toppled in a military-backed people revolt.

Most of Buringbaka's other signed the impeachment complaint against Davide are allies of Estrada, who is now detained and on trial for corruption.

The stock market rose likewise upward last week by the volatility of the peso, which did fall to the 55 levels against the dollar, as well as the weakening of the regional markets.

The stay in countries in the grand city and Japan markets likewise weighed down on the performance of most markets in the Asian region, including the Philippines.

"I think the local market will continue to be weak. Investors' going to wait until Nov. 13, when PLDT reports its third quarter earnings for the nine to see," Eagle Equities Inc. president Joseph Bonus said.

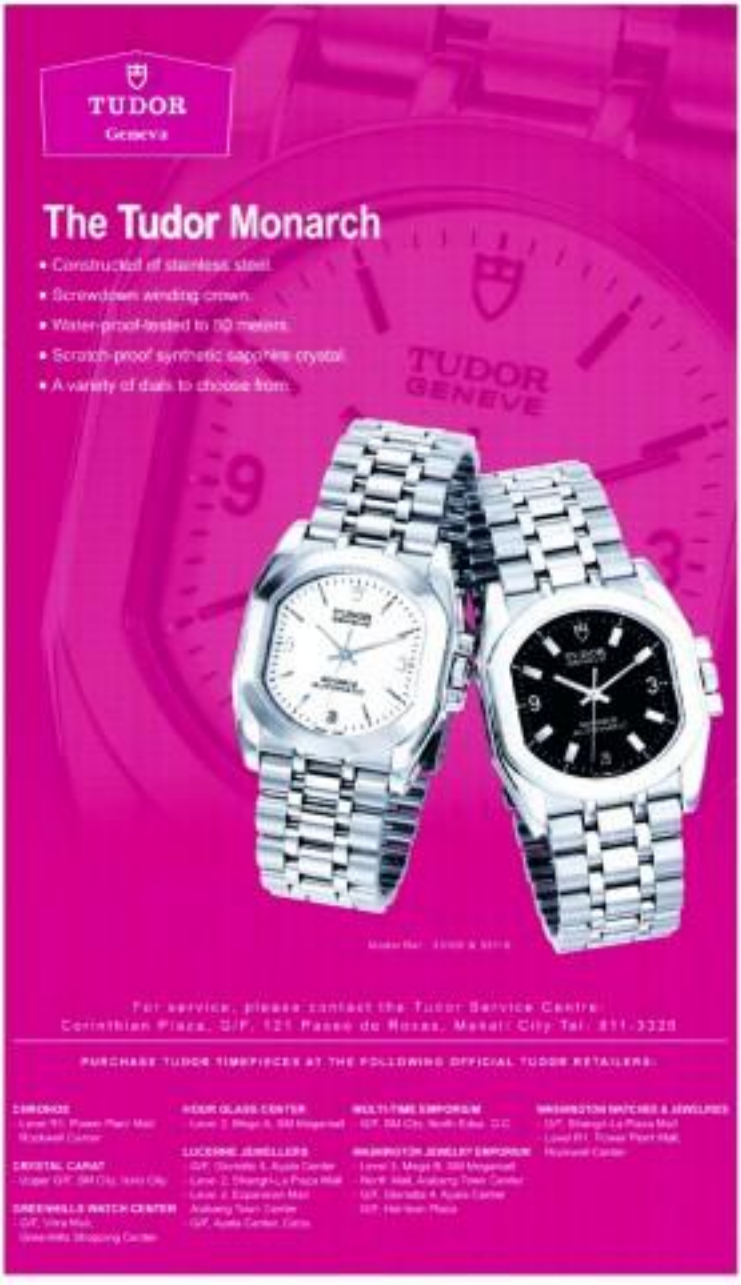
Vidal agreed that the market would continue to consolidate and would likely go down this week.

"We don't think we're going to see a big selloff, but there's definitely not that much room to move up, too," he said.

"Some traders have made a lot of money in the market since May. They're looking for an opportunity to take profits, and they're getting it. Some investors are already waiting to gather ahead of the 3rd quarter corporate earnings reporting season, so many believe that its big earnings outlook has pushed stocks to high working ratings," Vidal added.

BPI Securities, on the other hand, said a push of a possible PEI candidacy or next year's presidential elections had present few something for investors not the third quarter results may provide impetus for bounce buying opportunities.

"We expect investors to eventually dis-



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Gov't plan to tap bond market for 2004 funding need OKd

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SAR EAST MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

By Clarissa S. Balino

THE POLICYMAKING Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has approved in principle the plan of the national government to raise from the long-term bond market by the end of the year or loosely 2004 its remaining P1 billion offshore funding requirements for next year.

"We have discussed the idea and we approved of it in principle. It depends if they raise the money before the end of the year because it is hard to tell what could happen next year. There are too much political noises already," said Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura.

In another development, the BSP said it would go back on the syndicated loan market to raise $500 million in five-year bonds after the May 2004 elections to pay obligations falling due next year.

The BSP has to settle $600 million in maturing loans next year. About $200 million of the total loans were in the form of 5-year loans and bonds issued in 1999 while $1.38 billion formed part of the $365-million syndicated loan in April this year that will mature in one year.

All foreign borrowings, including that of the government, have to be approved by monetary authorities which monitors the country's external debt level.

Buenaventura said pre-funding the requirements of the national government for next year would ease the pressure on the country's external reserves as well as on the peso. It will also allow the government to borrow at more attractive rates, he added.

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Trial and terror

HOW dare those obnoxious 58 or so congressmen try to spoil their moral and talk openly about graft and corruption in the Supreme Court!

That's just not done in a democratic country like ours, which enjoys such a justice system so pure, and it applies whether or not the loathsome congressmen are talking the truth.

It is clear that here nobody should dare even think of accusing anybody in the Supreme Court of having anything to do with graft and corruption.

Under the principle of separation of abilities, those others in washing clothes, for one, the Supreme Court is an independent and ethical supreme being, can, body, pole.

***

ANY citizen of this republic who will has an active conscience can derive such a simple truth from all the scary cell phone text messages going around.

The messages all defend Chief Justice Hilario Davide by attacking all those unknown congressmen who signed his impeachment to the Senate.

For his part, Davide counters the graft and corruption charges against him, which may lead to a trial, by invoking his right to use such terms as his accusers.

Backed by the power of text messaging, Davide thus is able to add political color to the attempt in Congress to try him for something to do with—of all things—money.

***

POLITICS and politics alone should be behind the move in the House of Representatives to impeach Davide. This, of course, is according to the camp of Davide himself.

For who should initiate the case against him but a congressman who belongs to the NPC political party of Edsaista Cojuangco Jr.—a.k.a. Eraserhead?

As it happens, the chair and CEO of San Miguel also has 17-year old cases still pending before the Supreme Court.

Let me see, by getting Davide out of the way, Eraserhead can now readily win those long-running cases because now he must contend with only 14 more Supreme Court justices, whom he has sliced up by attacking their chief colleague. Is that it?

***

BAR Williams Fuentebella claims a group of Supreme Court employees have "unconfirmed" reports about their pay. What unconfirmed deals was they could see that the Supreme Court was spending a lot of money on "investments" like honey cows and mansions.

Bobby, an NPC member, Fuentebella runs in the party for support. About 43 NPC members signed the impeachment of Davide.

But take a look at this, just take one good hard look: about 20 members of the NPC in the House, or more than a third, did NOT sign the impeachment.

***

SET Lakas, the party of this core administration, had some 30 congressmen among the signatories. And so the whole thing has become a plot hatched by Eraserhead and Gloriastra against Davide.

I thought Shakiania has been accused of being so weak, politically, she could not even control her own party, being a stranger to it and all, in the first place.

If indeed Gloriastra has had anything to do with it, and she could control her party members, how come only 36 of the Lakas congressmen signed? Why not all of them?

And how come various other bills that can enhance Gloriastra's popularity are not even getting a second look from her supposed "dynamites" in the House?

***

MORAYMOR, a fellow political junkie—he is the Liberal Party, the LDP and the party for representation—also signed the impeachment to make up 95 or so signatories.

Now who controls those 20 or so congressmen? Who ordered them to jump on the Queen Davide, who has only been protecting the Supreme Court by refusing to explain the money?

Not a word of explanation ever came out of the Supreme Court about the money which started it all, the so-called Judicial Development Fund.

Nobody ever knows how much money is in the "special" fund, much less how the money has been used, not even whether or not the Supreme Court itself justices followed the rules.

***

MOREMOST who likes a case in court contributes to the fund. Under the law, a portion of the filing fee must go straight to the fund.

Also under the law, 80 percent of the fund must be used to benefit judges, court employees and such. Only 20 percent could be used for infrastructure to the locality where the money was collected, or more exactly.

The Senate insisted that it had the power to look into the use of the fund because it was set by law, not to mention that the Senate itself appropriates public funds.

The Supreme Court took the position that it "can't abandon" fund accounting and even the Senate could not meddle in its money affairs.

***

THUS, to certain congressmen who signed the impeachment, the end of Davide was a way to resolve the conflict once and for all.

To others, it is an invasion of guilt and corruption, and as such—much like the Supreme Court chief justice—can invoke immunity and/or bad luck.

Whatever the reasons that have marched the House, the Supreme Court does not really handle the JDF as a separate fund because it is co-mingled with other funds.

How do you account for the use of the money then? Here's the law that created the fund specified its uses? All the congressmen wanted was a little explanation.

***

BEYOND of an explanation, the Supreme Court issued a circular to the effect that none of the court employees must respond to the queries of congressmen regarding the fund.

To top it all, award-marked some congressmen, perhaps through some court employees themselves, about a certain Belen.

The guy supposedly ran in the PRAC of the Supreme Court, the public building and awards committee, which decided on huge contracts.

Belen's participation in the PRAC was well documented by congressmen who thought it was a questionable practice inasmuch as the man was related to Davide.

Siy-niority rule

THE GROUP of Bernardine Siy has managed to secure a temporary restraining order from a Makati judge on Friday against the group of brother George that effectively allowed the Bernardine group entry into their offices at the family-owned Singapore section building in Salcedo Village.

A squad of Makati policemen was seen at the building, allegedly called by the George group, while the Bernardine group tried to move the TRO.

Happily, the two factions let their business tenant prevail over their emotions and the Bernardine group was allowed to enter their padlocked offices and remove their remaining stuff without any untoward incident.

According to this grapevine, the George side, who controls the building, ordered the padlocking of the offices of The Roanoke Group...the Bernardine-controlled family corporation that owns the local luxury Bojacs, Jeanette's Best, and Peppie's franchises...after noting that the Bernardine group had been spiriting office equipment and boxes of documents, decamping, out of the building.

The George group claims that the Bernardine group—now the family building over six years in unpaid rent, the Bernardine group counters that the George group has not given them their share of income of the building for the past 12 years.

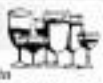
Earlier, George has filed a criminal complaint against certain officers of Jag and Lee, the Tagaday family company, after he was allegedly prevented from entering the joint factory in Manila.

The George side has retained the Villaraza and Angangco law firm, while the Bernardine side has engaged the ACCRA law office.

The sibling rivalry has been bubbling for years now, especially after the untimely death of their father, scion Benjamin Siy.

According to the grapevine, a number of family friends, Chinese elders, and professional associates including BOY chair Cesar Perlettas and Security Bank president Frederick Dy, had tried but failed to patch up the two warring factions or at least allow for an amicable division of the family empire.

COCKTALES



Victor C. Agustin

In usual in family feuds, the painstaking negotiations broke down because, somewhere along the way, nights and silences given and received while the siblings were still kids...one sibling's aquarium full of fish was said to had been poisoned by the other sibling

...suddenly were dredged up at the negotiating table.

In this fight, the Bernardine group seems to have gained the upper hand, especially with their brother and sister sibling with Bernardine, the eldest of the six Siy siblings. It also helps that Bernardine, who is in her early 40s and is single, still lives with her mother.

Edsa III in jubilatory

THE 16MC cabal of Erap lawyers is behind the impeach Davide move launched by the fawning congressmen.

Former Sen. Rene A.V. Saguisag has admitted that he and other Erap lawyers like Alex Poblete and ex-Sup Jogd scionid Hamlet Bennerton had gone through the draft of the impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Hilario Davide before the Nationalist People's Coalition installed it through the House.

Saguisag says he is troubled by the unconstitutional shortcuts taken by Davide and the Edsa II forces in counting Joseph Estrada, without admitting to the constitutional shortcuts resorted to by the Edsa I forces, wherein Saguisag was a leading partisan in driving Ferdinand Marcos out of Malacañang.

Heard through the grapevine

THE POLITICALLY correct Makati Business Club has banned the buzzwords from its press conferences and other public functions.

(Comments may be e-mailed to e-mail:cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at e-mail:cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

DBP to tap $70-M term loan

STATE-owned Development Bank of the Philippines is borrowing $70 million under a three-year loan arranged by ING Bank N.V., Mitsubishi Financial group and Standard Chartered Bank.

Proceeds of the term loan facility will be used to refinance the government financial institution's maturing and callable obligations and for the bank's general corporate purposes.

A senior DBP official explained that the bank DBP borrowed short-term from the interbank market to cover for the maturing balance of a $175-million euro bond issue worth $70 million. The bond was issued five years ago.

"Now, we are looking at the possibility of having longer term areas to cover for the short term borrowings," the official said. "What we are looking at is a fixed rate (loan) for three years."

Elvira R. Tuvilejo

Napocor to award $711-M coal deal

By Reena F. M. Domingo

A COAL supply contract worth some $711 million will be awarded to Mindoro Coal Trading Co. for the fuel needs of the 1,200-megawatt Subic power plant, a National Power Corp. official said yesterday.

"The approval of the contract would not wait until the next meeting of the board of directors since the contract is for emergency deliveries," the source said.

The contract covers the shipment of coal totaling 525,000 metric tons to be delivered between November and December.

In a bidding held last week, Mindoro Coal is the bidding—China Coal Chinese National Coal Import and Export Co.)—was disqualified for failing to submit a required document.

Mindoro offered $39.60 per metric ton of coal including freight—cost for a total of $13,595 million.

Napocor had set a ceiling price of $40 per ton or a budget cap of $13 million for the contract.

Last Friday's bidding was Napocor's fifth for coal supplies this year, tenders for which were called when another China coal supplier could not meet delivery commitments following an accident in one of its mines.

In July, Chinese supplier Shanxi Coal Import and Export Group Corp. bagged a contract worth about P866 million for the shipments to the Mindoro Philippines-operated coal plant.

Shanxi's commitment was to deliver 325,000 metric tons of fuel between September and December this year.

Napocor has executed off-grown contracts totaling some P16 billion after four biddings rounds in 2002.

Also, Napocor had announced it would need 4.9 million tons of imported coal and 2.2 million tons of local coal in 2004, already near a total of P2288.9 million or about P2.2-billion.

The firm's fuel needs were estimated to rise $175.5 million (about P9.36billion) for imports and P2.9 billion for local supply.

The suppliers are invited to bid coal plants that are run by Napocor and its build-operate-transfer partners in Sual, Pangasinan; Pagbilao, Quezon; Masinloc, Zambales; and Naga, Cebu.

Napocor imports coal for most of its coal plants as locally produced supply do not meet desired quality and standard of fuels needed by all but one of the country's coal plants.

Coal-fired plants represent 48 percent of the country's total electricity generation capacity.

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By Bernard W. Dominguez

MANILA Electric Co. has asked the Energy Regulatory Commission to allow it to issue financial instruments to cover for P16.6 billion worth of refunds or big customers.

In a three-page document filed with the ERC on Oct. 24, Meralco proposed that the fourth and final phase of its P30 billion refund be paid either through financial instruments or fund credit or bills, depending on the gross refund amount.

Meralco said the financial instruments would provide the customers the flexibility to liquidate their "refund coupons" whenever they wanted.

The utility added that such mode would reduce the same client gave Meralco the ease to secure from its cash flow difficulty and improve its credit ratings.

The processing of the refund through financial instruments would be completed by June 2004, it said.

For this, Meralco said the nature, yield and other relevant terms and conditions of the instrument were still being formulated by a committee formed for that purpose.

The firm said the committee was in coordination with various business groups concerned, and agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Department of Finance and Philippine Stock Exchange.

If the proposal is approved, Meralco said it intended and commenced customers with active accounts...and entitled to the refund...would be able to file their claims starting July 2003.

The processing of Phase IV refund claims with active accounts would take about five years up to the second quarter of 2010.

At the same time, big customers entitled to refunds but had terminated their accounts with Meralco could start filing claims by March 2010.

In an interview early this month, Meralco president Jesus Francisco explained that the instrument would make the process of refunding large customers as fast as possible.

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FIRSTS IN MUSICAL & VARIETY SHOWS

While its early television programs were visibly inspired by vaudeville and radio, ABS-CBN blazed the trail in delivering musical and variety entertainment as captured by a new medium.

In 1956, Pista ng Bayan starring the comic triumvirate of Pepsy Lopez and Pugo, was the first program on live television broadcast.

Through the initiative of ABS-CBN owner Eugenio Lopez Jr., the Procter-and-Gamble-sponsored Diwag ng Tanghalan duplicated its success in radio when it crossed over to television in 1958. It was the country's first televised amateur singing contest, breeding stars out of Bonnadee Mauricio, Edgar Mortiz and the phenomenal Nora Aunor.

In the 60's, An Evening with Pilita was the very first Filipino show to be recorded on tape. The combined efforts and talent of its star, Pilita Corrales and director Mike Velarde made it one of the most popular and awarded shows in TV history.

Meanwhile, ABS-CBN gave the country its first taste of a regular live noon program through Sunday Sweet Sunday in 1958. The noontime musical show aired excerpts from operettas and Broadway musicals sung by its stars Pilita Corrales-Reemoso and Jimmy Menendez.

After five decades of television, ABS-CBN's passion for dynamism and excellence lives on. Its musical and variety programs, as well as station-produced specials, remain industry benchmarks as they continue to bring in both ratings and awards. Unafraid to break new ground and redefine the industry, ABS-CBN relentlessly reinvents itself to bring world-class entertainment to every Filipino home.

50 YEARS ABS-CBN TELEVISION SINCE 1953

In The Service Of The Filipino

Higher tariff on rubber sought

By Michelle V. Bunyo

LOGIC rubber producers have asked the government to increase the tariff on imported rubber products to a minimum of 30 percent and a maximum of 50 percent, saying the low tariff environment had caused significant harm in the local rubber industry.

In a letter to the Department of Trade and Industry and the Tariff Commission, Philippine Rubber Industries Association Inc. cited the products that needed higher tariff relief.

The group sought 10-to 15-percent tariff on products currently slapped 3-percent and 5-percent duty, including plates, sheets and strip; hose, conveyor or transmission belts; inner tubes (for rubbers of cars and buses); nipples of baby feeding bottles; surgical gloves; floor coverings and mats; and rubber garters.

Products currently slapped a tariff of 10 percent, such as pneumatic tires and footwear, should be imposed a much higher tariff of 22 percent to 30 percent, it said.

The industry's request for additional tariff protection came in a time when the Tariff Commission was undertaking a review of the country's tariff structure for possible realignment. The Tariff Commission is set to release the results of the review before the end of the year.

The Tariff Commission had decided to review the tariff structure after complaints of the worsening business climate from various industries swamped the CTF.

The Federation of Philippine Industries earlier said many companies from different industries were forced to close shop because they were unable to permanently lose tough foreign competition.

While the country's average bound tariff under the WTO was set at 26 percent, chewing apples (5 tariff rate was only 3 percent.

FPI secretary general Joseph Pereza earlier said local industries would agree to the lowering of tariffs only if other issues affecting business, such as electricity cost and peso-dollar exchange rate, would be made more favorable.

Meralco admits some projects not OKd by ERC

By Nassid W. Dorotinga

DESPITE THE fact Manila Electric Co. admitted to the Philippine Stock Exchange that it had invested capital expenses without the approval of the industry regulator,

Energy Regulatory Commission Chair Manuel Sanchez said last week that the ERC was investigating Meralco and 13 other utilities for possible unauthorized projects.

In a circular for brokers dated Oct. 24, PSE senior vice president Jose G. Gervasio quoted Meralco as saying it had "experienced certain failures ... in several prior ERC approval due to the urgency of the need for the projects."

Meralco further said: "We have taken steps to address this and ensure that, henceforth, we will be compliant with the requirements."

In an interview last Tuesday, Meralco explained that capital expenses were part of a utility's cost of doing business, which could be recovered from consumers.

Capital expenses needed to be registered so that utilities would not incur unnecessary costs and burden consumers, Sanchez said.

The official also said the erring power firms faced fines of between P50,000 and P50 million if found violating regulations.

The other utilities under probe, according to PSE records, are Angeles Electric Co., Cebuanolam Electric Corp., Cotabato Light and Power Co., Cagayan Electric Power & Light Co., Bataan Electric Corp., Ilocos Electric and Engineering Corp., Republic Light Power Inc., La Union Electric Co., Masinloc Corp., Pangasinan Electric Co., Power Electric Co., San Fernando Electric Light and Power Co. and Subic Electric Co. Inc.

Commonwealth Act 146 requires electric distribution utilities to seek the approval of regulators before they could build, operate or maintain new facilities and services, or expand existing facilities.

In an earlier interview, a government source said Meralco underwent 279 electric capital projects between 1994 and 2000—without the commission's approval.

Estimates show that these projects cost a total of about P6 billion.

Asean5 minus 1?

LEAVING through the first English daily newspaper The Nation in my flight back to Manila from Bangkok last Friday, I spotted many on the Asean Common Market with the title "Go easy, says Manila envoy" caught my attention...and quickly got me both depressed and angry.

Out of the league

The article quoted the Philippine Ambassador to Bangkok as stating that "a common market would be good for the region, but ... should begin with only those countries that are ready." He was further quoted as saying that the process could be launched by "regular" countries such as Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, but it would take until 2020 to bring aboard the remaining Asean members."

The article left me depressed because here was our top government official in Thailand saying that the Philippines, Brunei and Vietnam was not "capable," and just like Asean newcomers Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, we are so weak as to need extra time to be part of even the launching of an Asean Common Market. He was practically telling the world that we have effectively "dropped out of the league of our competitors in the group commonly known as Asean5. The term is used to denote the five original and therefore most mature and economically strongest members of the 10-member Asean.

How not to project ourselves

The article also left me angry because the statements all too clearly reflected the very lack of self-esteem and confidence in ourselves that has cut us back behind our neighbors for far too long. It is bad enough that we are only ninth in our economic size of the host of foreign investments that our erstwhile twin economy Thailand is now attracting. Recently, for example, are were making such a big deal about Intel's pledge of a $500-million investment in a new factory...and yet these are crumbs compared to the $500 million their neighbor just got committed to...and that when our top officials go around telling the world we are weak and incapable, how can we expect to be taken seriously by the investment community? How can we even get our own domestic investors to keep faith in our own economy rather than bring their capital abroad?

Bullish Thailand, sheepish Philippines

Another article that caught my interest dealt on how Thailand and Singapore were leading the race of the Asean in getting into bilateral agreements to strengthen economic integration in the region. At the same time, the two have also been going ahead with bilateral free trade deals with major partners outside the group. Singapore has just signed a free trade agreement with the United States. Thailand has just signed a similar agreement with India, and is zealously studying following the example of Singapore with the US. The aggressiveness of Thailand in particular is striking, and is arousing admiration from the investment community, tangibly manifested in even greater investment stakes being placed with them. In contrast, we are acutely retreating on some of our commitments to the Asean Free Trade Area (Afta) to sell.

Who's afraid of a common market?

For all the claims that we are too inexperienced to join an Asean common market, our officials don't seem to realize that we actually stand to benefit from it even more than our neighbors. A common market is a high-level of economic integration beyond a **free trade area, wherein members simply** remove tariffs on each other's products while keeping their distinct (and) different ar-ra-ra vis-ra-vis non-members. With a common market, members also adopt a uniform tariff scheme applied to non-members, and permit movement among themselves of labor and capital.

I don't see why we should worry about harmonizing our tariff rates to non-member economies. The critics of our supposedly "too aggressive" trade liberalization in the 1990s allege that our neighbors actually kept their import tariffs higher than ours. (The claim is not even true. While it may seem so if we banks on a simple average of tariff rates, we we must count protection based on trade-weighted averages). In effect, they are saying that lowering our tariffs is all right if our neighbors did not keep theirs higher than ours. But this is exactly what a common market achieves, where we would all have uniform external tariffs.

There should be even less reason to worry about free movement of labor and capital within Asean. As a labor exporting country, free access by our workers to opportunities in our more dynamic neighbors can only work to our advantage. So will free capital mobility, for it will make it easier for us to get more job-generating investments from our more affluent neighbors. At the same time, it would be easier for Filipino capital to seek more lucrative ventures in our neighboring economies.

Rather than proclaiming our own weakness, we should be extolling our strengths and potentials to the external audience. This was how President Kanon successfully sold our economy to the international community in the 1950s. Now we have Cabinet members and ambassadors telling the world "Sir, we can't!" rather than proclaim "Sir, we can!" (or in Pinoy-speak, "Kaya natin 'to!"). ...and we wonder why the massive investments entering our region are largely passing us by.

(Comments welcome at chaktin@pacific.net.ph)

NO FREE LUNCH

Carlito P. Harbito

Slow trading week . . .

Philam Plans projects higher profits

By Elena B. Tarrija

PHILAM Plans Inc., the company's ailing pre-need company, is expecting to profit this year than last year's level despite lower sales in the first eight months compared with that in the same period last year.

In a recent press briefing, Philam Plans president and chief executive officer Rodolfo A. Ong said the company, however, might achieve less than its target profit for this year of P400 million to P500 million.

"This year has been a challenging year," Ong said.

The company's sales in the first eight months of this year in terms of gross contract price amounted to P4.2 billion, lower than the P4.9 billion recorded last year.

Company officials, however, said that September sales were so good that it pushed the total for the first nine months ahead of last year's comparative level.

Industry-wide, sales of pre-need plans have been sluggish, particularly that of pension and education plans which have been mainstays of the industry.

Ong also said he was worried that the company's profits this year might be reduced by the Securities and Exchange Commission's implementation of new pre-need rules that would require pre-need companies to set aside additional reserves.

To further boost sales, Ong said Philam Plans would expand in the provinces where its competition had been seeing sales growth.

The company, which has 70 offices nationwide, said the largest market share is pre-need plans, aims to put up branches in the Visayas and Mindanao regions, particularly Cebu, Bonagacia, Davao and Surigao.

Meanwhile, Philam Plan's officials also said that the company's mutual trust fund level amounted to P6.5 billion as of August this year, more than P2 billion than the P4.267 billion level recorded at the end of 2001.

The trust fund is largely invested in government securities such and equities and stock investments making up only 1.8 percent and 2.7 percent of the total fund as of the 2002 period.

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Megaworld eyes 25% stake in Fort Boni developer

By Doni C. Dundas

PROPERTY developer Megaworld Corp. has expressed interest in acquiring a 25 percent stake in Global City developer Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. from the state-owned Bases Conversion Development Authority.

"We are studying it. It's interesting," Megaworld treasurer-treasurer officer Lake Tee told the business.

"We are waiting for more details, guidelines, terms, price, etc.," Tee added.

Next to the Ayala-Campos group, which bought a 10 percent stake in TREC by buying out the shares of Metro Pacific Corp. in consortium leader Bonifacio Land Co., Megaworld has the biggest interest in the former Fort Bonifacio military camp.

Megaworld's first venture in Fort Bonifacio is Richmonde Heights — an elite charter residential development in joint venture with businessman Cirilo Rufino's Bonifacio West Development Corp.

Its latest project is a 30.38 joint venture with Alliance Global Inc. for the development of the 23-hectare Laurion Parkway last outside the 150-hectare property under TREC.

BCDA earlier planned to sell its entire 40 percent stake in TREC to the private sector, but later trimmed the equity stake on the auction block to 25 percent.

BCDA plans to sell the remaining 25 percent stake in TREC when the property market improves.

The 25 percent stake for sale, however, would still give the buyer considerable influence in the consortium since the majority stake of 55 percent is equally owned by Ayala Land Inc. and the Campos group's Greenhill Development Corp.

BCDA has started the search for a financial advisor in preparation for the privatization of the remaining stake in TREC. The state agency hopes to generate up to P7 billion from the sale of its stake in the company.

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Seminar on Credit Analysis and Management
November 8, 15 and 22, 2003
(Saturday, Friday and Saturday)

This seminar will enable lenders to understand macroeconomic variables that impact on firm's operations. This seminar also includes credit evaluation techniques to enable the lender to assess the issues and risks risks of lending to borrowers and to determine prerequisite requirements.

Module 1
Saturday, November 8
Macroeconomic variables and credit analysis
Industry analysis and prospects of selected industries

Module 2
Friday and Saturday, November 14 and 15
Financial and non-financial factors in credit analysis
Loan pricing issues
Property appraisal
Credit management and loan/client monitoring

Seminar on Risk Analysis and Management
September 12 and 13, 2003
(Friday and Saturday)

Today's financial markets have seen the proliferation of financial assets which are exposed to increasing risks due to interest rate volatility, foreign exchange fluctuation, and changes in other market variables. This challenge for financial practitioners is to measure and manage these risks using financial and quantitative tools. This two-day seminar discusses:

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Friday, November 21
Quantifying financial risk
Value-at-risk metrics
Financial derivatives

Module 2
Saturday, November 22
Financial Derivatives
Use of derivatives in risk management

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Dole to increase fruit exports

By Christine A. Gaylican

DAVAO CITY—Dole Asia Ltd. plans to increase its exports of Philippine fresh cuts pineapples and mangoes to New Zealand, which would bring in additional earnings of between $10 million and $15 million.

This was disclosed by Dole vice president for fresh sourcing John L. Cisneros at the inauguration of the two-day Mindanao Food Congress.

Cisneros said in the interview that Dole plans to export to the origin subsequent hourly ripe pineapples from its super-fresh treatment facilities here next year.

Dole Asia's VHF facility trucks down to Davao City next year, thus, limiting its export volume to key markets such as Japan and New Zealand.

Quezon-area officials from the Bureau of Plant Industry feared Dole from shipping out produce to Japan due to complaints that a shipment of fruits to Japan was infested with fruit flies.

"We are yet to reach 100 percent of what we used to export, but this will build over time," Cisneros explained.

The Philippines is one of the top two exporters of cuts papayas and mangoes to Auckland and Japan.

"Before this happened we occupied 55 percent of the market in the export of these fresh fruits. This dropped to 23 percent following the suspension. But it is interesting to note that our competitor, Hawaii, did not expand its production to capture our lost market share. We want to get what share back," Cisneros said.

Dole Asia, a subsidiary of the Florida-based Dole Food Co., also exports fresh cuts pineapple, mangoes, Cavendish bananas, pineapples and asparagus to Hong Kong and South Korea. It plans to soon penetrate Shanghai, China.

Cisneros said that Mindanao has a good chance of capturing an even bigger slice of the export market, but said that it has to battle the major challenge of producing quality fruits on a large scale.

WTO: What Now?

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Manuelo C. General

THE COLLAPSE of the World Trade Organization talks in Cancun was claimed as a victory by the poor nations. The rich nations turned up their noses and said it would be the poor nations that actually suffer. What now?

Let's start from the beginning. After World War II, the Allies, magnanimous in victory, set out to establish a "New World Order" to avoid future world wars. In the field of politics, The United Nations came into being. In international finance, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund opened for business.

In international trade—the buying and selling of goods—the General Agreement for Tariffs and Trade was hammered out. In 1946 in London, 23 founding nations (the Philippines included) signed the initial agreement covering about 20 percent of world trade. A gigantic, worldwide paleigh was on.

Since then, various negotiations—called rounds—were conducted to expand GATT's scope. The eighth round and the largest was started in Punta del Este in Uruguay in 1986, hence its name Uruguay Round.

In April 1994, representatives of 109 nations signed The Final Act Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations.

The agreement was a monster. The replacing World Act was actually, which led to Revitalizing the Philippine Senate.

The two biggest decisions at the Uruguay Round were creating the World Trade Organization to implement the rules of trade and expanding the scope of the rules to include financial services (such as insurance), intellectual properties, labor and agricultural products.

From the very start, the basic idea was to promote international trade by embarking on a long-term program of trade liberalization (a new buzzword) by cutting tariffs, quotas and subsidies.

Trade liberalization stems from the economic principle that goes something like this: by making trade barriers, consumer prices go down and more people can afford to buy. As more people buy, industries grow up to meet the rising demand. All that leads to more investments, more jobs and higher incomes, a virtuous circle comes all true.

Under the Uruguay round, the rich countries committed to cut their agricultural price support programs (meaning subsidies) by 20 percent by 2000. At Cancun, the poor nations wanted subsidies reduced further. To the Philippines, this is crucial because by 2005 we will have to open our market to foreign rice and corn, which are heavily subsidized in the US.

The subsidy allows the American, European and Japanese farmer to export even at a loss. The subsidy totals $300 billion a year. Under these conditions, there is no way the poor nations can compete.

The poor nations also wanted the rich nations to open up their markets to agricultural produce from poor nations by doing away with cumbersome barriers such as inspections and red tape.

But, as Cancun, the rich nations did not want to be cowed. They just wanted to talk, and talk some more. Thus the round collapsed.

As an investment broker, I am, by definition, a bare marketeer. I work best in the bi-coal, run-by-splatch-of-an-open-and-free market, where buyers and sellers, with little or no government intervention, strike up mutually beneficial deals.

But competing in the world market against the real cost heavily subsidized by the US federal government is the playing poker against someone with unlimited funds and busy men up his sleeve. The best thing to do is to walk in your chips and walk away.

As a consequence, I don't really mind buying imported California rice partly paid for by the American taxpayer, thank you very much. But, over the long haul, what will happen to my relatives and friends in Nueva Ecija if they can no longer sell their rice and corn at a profit even at the neighborhood sukiyaki?

The rich nations have their own problems. They cannot sell their agricultural produce at home and abroad without heavy government subsidies. That is an ever-growing monstrous problem rich nations will have to face up to sooner or later. I suspect the rich nations desperately want to make a deal—sooner than later.

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GIR seen down to $15B by end 2003

By Clarissa S. Bedro

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas said the country's gross international reserves would drop to about $15 billion by the end of the year despite the inflow from the recent $1.05-billion bond issue of the national government.

Without the inflow from the bond issue last Oct. 17, the external reserves would be lower at $14 billion by year-end. As of September, the GIR came at $16.16 billion, according to the BSP.

"It could be higher than $15 billion but the conservative year-end outlook already took into account the proceeds of the recent bond issue," said BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the external reserves could exceed $16 billion if the government would push through with its plan to go back to the global bond market by December to raise another $1 billion.

With the potential inflow, the GIR by yearend could match the end-2002 level of $16.17 billion.

The GIR as compared to the central bank includes about $2 billion in funds used as collateral or short-term loans. Using the more conservative computation of the International Monetary Fund, declaring the collateral from the total would bring down the reserves to only about $14 billion.

Aside from including in the computation the funds used as collateral, foreign bank-regulatory watchdog of the government insisted the BSP propped up the external reserves to a level that even the central bank had admitted to be artificial. This is because loan proceeds are only deposited in the banks temporarily.

The Philippines has one of the lowest level of external reserves in Asia. Currently, Thailand has about three times more, South Korea has about $100 billion and Japan even

Legacy Plans gets into mutual fund business

LEGACY Consolidated Plans Inc., has diversified into the mutual fund business by acquiring a 45-percent stake in Emergent Asset Management Inc.

Organized in 1989 mainly as a pre-need firm, Legacy earlier ventured into banking and credit card business through subsidiaries.

With its innovative products and services catering to the growing demand for short-term investments, Legacy saw in the field of mutual funds an opportunity where investments normally grow over time and yet you can withdraw cash anytime.

Emergent Asset Management is the fund manager of Emergent Fund Inc. which has been dormant for several years because of lack of interest in mutual funds, absence of infrastructure and capital to generate investments.

Legacy's entry in the mutual fund business is supposed to give Emergent Asset Management the much-needed shot in the arm in reviving its moribund operations.

During the Emergent Fund stockholders meeting last Oct. 23, the stockholders approved the change in investment objective and policy of the firm.

The firm will now concentrate investment of its funds in government securities since fixed-income securities is guaranteed by the government which eliminates the risk of losses.

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Napocor to give 15 firms discount of 50¢ per kWh

By Roviel W. Domingo

THE STATE-RUN National Power Corp. has granted 15 more customers a discount of 50 centavos per kilowatt-hour under its Special Program to Enhance Electricity Demand.

According to Napocor's marketing and commercial relations department, the power firm had pre-qualified more customers for Phase 1 of Speed+ to encourage these bulk customers to increase their electricity purchases by offering discounts.

The new beneficiaries of Speed+ include Subic Electric Inc., Angeles Electric Corp, Cabanatuan Electric Corp., Iligan Electric Corp., La Union Electric Cooperative, Visayan Electric Co., Cebu Electric Cooperative, Cagayan Electric Power & Light Co. and San Fernando Electric Light & Power).

Napocor also pre-qualified power-intensive industrial firms for the discount scheme.

These include General Milling Corp., Tip Sintex Corp., United Governor Chemicals, Conditional Cements Corp., Filipinas Ice and Cold Storage, and Philippine Export Processing Zone in Baguio City which houses Texas Instruments and Moog Controls.

The pre-qualification of the 15 electric cooperatives came after Napocor signed a typed agreement with Davao Electric Co., the country's largest private electric utility, last April.

Mendoza's statement that quality under the program would get a total discount of 72 centavos per kWh since the National Transmission Corp. agreed to give a separate discount of 18 centavos per kWh aside from Mendoza's 2 centavos per kWh.

GIR seen down to $15B by end 2003

[illegible] twice that amount. During the Asian crisis, the country's GIR dropped to single-digit levels.

A healthy level of foreign exchange reserves assures the country's trading partners that it could pay its debts and importantly, it is also an important factor in boosting investor and creditors' confidence in the country.

Consisting mainly of US dollars, the GIR is the total foreign currency holdings of the central bank including gold and special drawing rights, the currency used by the International Monetary Fund.

The central bank uses its dollar reserves as intervene in the market and strengthen the peso. The BSP also extends loans or banks, using the GIR.

Notice To The Public

Notice is hereby served to the general public and investing principals that the Makati RTC Br. 59, in its order dated July 31, 2002 has effected and enforced the WRIT of ATTACHMENT on the entire PAMANA ISLAND (in Subic Bay), titled to Pamana Island Resort Hotel and Marina Club, Inc. in favor of Primelink Properties and Developement Corporation (PLPDC) who is acting for and behalf of protecting its own interest and that of other investors.

The investing public is enjoined to honor and uphold the above cited court order.

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NHMFC to settle ₱6.5-B debt to GSIS

By Riena B. Torrijos

THE NATIONAL Home Mortgage Finance Corp. will soon settle its P6.5-billion debt to the Government Service Insurance System with the issuance of the housing loans funded by the state-controlled pension fund.

"We'll cover the P6.5 billion with residential mortgages and then we'll call it quits," NHMFC president Angelito Salud told reporters last week.

Salud, however, said that NHMFC would not return the residential mortgages funded by GSIS unless the latter agreed to the "correct amount of debt" owed by the housing agency.

NHMFC claimed that it owed GSIS only P6.5 billion, but GSIS president and chief executive Winston Garcia repeatedly said that the debt was actually P12 billion.

Dela Rama Salud of Isla & Young, which together with Punongbayan & Araullo serve as NHMFC financial advisers, explained that the government housing agency borrowed P6.5 billion from GSIS around a decade ago as it [illegible] home housing loans.

Since then, NHMFC has received P6 billion in interest and principal payments. The records of the housing agency supported by receipts of the previous payments, showed that NHMFC's only owed GSIS some P6.5 billion.

NHMFC executive vice president and lawyer Pedrito Adriga said that a joint GSIS and NHMFC team had already reconciled their records and affirmed the P6.5-billion debt, but GSIS top management might not have yet been informed of the results.

NHMFC adopted a rehabilitation plan when it began falling behind on its debt payments to the GSIS, Social Security System and the Home Development Mutual Fund.

All these had funded the NHMFC's Unified Home Lending Program, now covering roughly P40 billion in housing loans.

The housing loans have been divided into highly delinquent, moderately delinquent and current accounts.

Italian jeweler expands Subic Freeport operations

By Michelle V. Ramos

ITALIAN jewelry maker Tradizione Orafa S.R.L. Sorelina is set to expand its operations in the Subic Bay Freeport due to the growing demand for its top-of-the-line jewelry, according to company officials.

Tradizione said it intended to increase its workforce by at least 50 to meet the expected increase in demand, especially after it signed a partnership with famous Italian jeweler Ligas Bonca.

The tie up means that Tradizione will now produce and distribute Bonca jewelry in the Philippines.

"Tradizione will be expanding its operations by occupying more space to accommodate the production of Bonca products, considered as one of the best fashion jewelry in the world," Alfredo Bonanno of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority said in a statement.

From 35 employees when it began operations in the country, Tradizione now employs 46 local jewelry craftsmen.

The company's expansion would include the purchase of additional machinery needed for the design and production of jewelry and the expansion of its workplace to accommodate an additional 50 employees.

Bonanno said the expansion of the foreign jewelry firm's operations in Subic indicated that there was still investor interest in the former military base, which was turned into a prime economic zone.

Dionysio Campos, one of the owners of Tradizione, said the growth of the company's operations in Subic could be partly attributed to the government's support and to Subic's strategic location in the Asia-Pacific region.

Campos also noted the high quality of labor provided by Filipino workers, especially their knack for fashion, which he said was a big plus in the jewelry business.

Arts & Design LIFESTYLE

Editor Chele Bensil-Formoso
Subsection Editor Lira Zubiaga

Murano via Venice reaches Manila

LE SPEZIE. Pendant necklace made of 16 beads in blue and red-orange. The rose-colored is called Zacchero.

ZEBU. Bracelet made of 14 sticks of red and clear Murano glass and an elastic band

The world-famous Murano glass receives a modern clean look in jewelry designed by two Venetian sisters named Marina and Susanna Sent

Text by James P. Ong
Contributor
Photos by Jared Lucenara

ONE STORMY, flooded September morning a year ago, Clarisse Oben, 32, a lawyer in Manila, found herself, her husband and youngest sister traveling by water bus from Venice to the islands of Murano in Italy—a place known for its centuries-old tradition of making decorative glass objects.

They had just come from Milan and Verona, on their way to Rome to attend the inauguration of Opus Dei founder José Maria Escrivá. Oben was religious, but she was also a serious bead collector, and so, in Venice a few days earlier, she found herself looking for the perfect objects d'art to add to her collection.

It was there, along Campo San Vio in Venice and in Antiquorum, the Peggy Guggenheim Museum and the Accademia, that Oben stumbled into a small shop selling the finest origin and glassware—their vases to glass purses to jewelry.

The name of the shop was Murino and Susanna Sent. Oben immediately fell in love with the jewelry and bought a fair amount of them on her first day. And on her second. On her third. On her fourth.

"Until the sales staff told me, there's nothing we can tell you anymore—we've already showed you everything. They then suggested that we go to their studio in Murano, where everything is made," says Oben.

PUNTA PELLICIA. Small beads of amber are shaped in overlapping rings to simulate the look of harbor piers.

In Murano

Murano glass has been famous around the world since the 14th century. The masters there are known for their bead-making skills and for that glass used in mosaics.

Murano itself is four spectacular class beauty, and it's free from the gaggles of multi-coloured tourists. And it's not easy to go around looking for a particular place, especially for a glass factory, and because there are so many of them but for the reason that they are closely guarded and famously hidden from potential pirates.

And so it was with great shock that the first stores, in their tiny, welcomed Oben.

"Apparently it was a mistake by the store clerks to give us the factory address in Murano, because they don't really welcome visitors there," the explains. "From the outside, it looked like an abandoned building, but when we went in, there was a courtyard and another building in the back where they created the glass."

The Asian speaks Italo-English. Oben knows no Italian, so they used the "turn-turn" (hand signal) system to negotiate the purchase of a few more baubles.

Dealership

By the time she came back to Manila, Oben realized that she had fallen in love with the Jesuit Murano jewelry.

"I liked their modern design, their color, the fact that they were very different from all the Murano items. And they are made by artists," she says.

The first family has been in the glassmaking business for generations, on both maternal and paternal sides. Susanna, who studied architecture, and Marina, who took up chemistry, worked for their father (who designs glass homeware such as tables and ashtrays) before opening their own firm.

Their works are now sold in the boutiques of the principal museums of the world, including the Contemporary Art of Verona, but it was around 10 years ago when they first made it big.

It was in that time when the Jesuit sisters created a necklace they named "Hilary." The gift shop of the Museum of Modern Art in New York picked it up, and it became an overnight hit, eventually spawning imitations.

The design was simple: a strand of loose beads strung together at intervals with a silver-lining line. The very popular bead necklaces, using semi-precious stones and fluorescent crystals (which, incidentally, are cut and shaped in nearby Murano) are being done now

(CONTINUED ON C2)

Must new architecture 'conform' to the old?

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

A TANGHERNAL gathering of parish priests on church preservation, somebody asked the modern priest if the new church the latter was planning would look old. Why? it was because his image of the Filipino included was Spanish-colonial.

God's style in this country is eclectic—baroque and neo architecture just doesn't deliver grandeur of that kind. Should we try recapturing it in a brand-new 2003 structure?

No. Heritage is not exclusive to the Spanish colonial era, nor is it confined to Roman Catholic structures. It extends to all eras of history from pre-Spanish colonial to the recent past. The making of heritage is a constant process. It is being made as we speak.

Churches of more recent vintage, like Santa Ana de San Antonio in Forbes Park (early 1950s) and Saint Andrew's Church in Bel-Air (mid-1960s), are bona fide heritage structures. El Hogar Building in Manila (1930s), 888 Building in Quezon City (1950s), and many of the Makati buildings from the 1960s to the present are heritage structures as well.

They all deserve, but unfortunately do not receive, the same respect accorded to their Spanish colonial predecessors.

Architecture is born in a specific historic time. Each building is the product of the design style and of the construction technology existing at the moment of its birth. So why should someone construct a building in 2003 and make it look like it was built 200 years ago?

A large part of the answer stems from an architectural misconception called "conforming architecture."

Unfortunate

"Conforming architecture" got its unfortunate start in this country from the International Administration construction guidelines that require new structures within the Walled City to replicate what originally stood on the site. If the new structure could not faithfully reproduce the original, a set of architectural design guidelines ensured that the new structure would "conform" to the forerunners look.

Many architects, not trained to think heritage, got the misconception that the forerunners guidelines were applicable nationwide. Instances related this phrase "conforming architecture." That was where the problem began.

As "conforming" architects first follow the shape of an old relic to form. Next, they smear whatever on concrete hollow block walls on the ground floor, throw an arch here and just up a set of pilasters there.

The iron grilles that cover windows are gone-by rules, no longer the heavy round bars of old because they are no longer available. Expo windows line up above false verandahs. A messy soup of ersatz this-ego-everything.

How new are many Bats today's roofing tiles are facsimile Japanese in design. Their profile is radically different from the authentic hand-made convex-on-a-base of the old today we have.

PARTITIONS: Next under separate! This century-save door screens to provide work and conference areas in Model France.

THROUGH: Successful architectural re-use, all of the buildings that used to be a 19th-century chocolate factory near Paris are now the modern-day headquarters of Nestlé France.

No standard

To what standard should the building "conform"? There is no standard. If the new architecture should conform to anything, it is to the heritage we have or to the Spanish colonial church. It should duplicate the original faithfully.

Because most new structures built to look old are far from faithful. The new structure is a pastiche, a bad imitator of an old building that intimidate heritage.

A perfect example of a totalitarian structure is the genius of late-fixed structures conforming all over the country, to places like provincial church, courthouses, arcade corners in intersections, and town plazas.

The first such sprawling fast-food outlets built in "old-time heritage" style are concentrated in areas like Intramuros, but well-known, and the rash that are architecture of Filipino heritage on the late stores designed in the image of Cadillac architecture strung along California highways. If these are accepted as conforming to California heritage, then let's not follow the example and accept the "Filipino heritage" style as a monument to scorn.

We can't replicate heritage architecture on a fast-food time frame and a concessionary budget. It was never done that way, although many of our "conforming" structures try to do it that way and look it.

When heritage structures were built genuinely ages ago, each was one of a kind, crafted with care, hand-made to last forever. The materials, technology, and craftsmanship of 300 years ago are gone. We build things differently today. We have a different aesthetic.

It's the aesthetic that needs working on. The aesthetics should say, "Old is old, now is now, and never the twain separate."

Keeping old and new separate means that if you are adding up to new building near a heritage one, rather than matching the heritage structure with copper patricks, follow the building code limitations carefully, but be bravest and construct a high-tech structure that reflects the architecture and technology of 2003.

Pseudo-heritage

It would have been more architecturally honest to have one of those supermodern, colorful, glass-enclosed fast-food stores in the shadow of the Vigan Cathedral half years rather than the pseudo-heritage structure built there with its one small bell tower. But strict heritage legislation prevents taking the exquisitely modern architectural approach.

The best answer is the thing of a new into the interior of an old Ilgas building while maintaining its exterior intact, keeping signage discreet, and preserving the heritage streetscape in the way that it has always been.

Preservation laws are strict about maintaining the original look of heritage districts. But final control in Europe take this approach when saving up to a heritage location. It is called architectural re-use.

Keeping old and new elements separate within a single structure makes interesting architecture. Not only that, it highlights what is old by showing how it has been updated by modern architecture. Schizophrenic it is not anything.

"Conforming" architecture is the root of so much bad architecture. Copying details from old buildings in an attempt to make new clones of the old really doesn't work.

Take a look at the many new buildings on our campus that fall for the conforming trap. Their modern glass and reinforced concrete halls not only come through as pseudo, they actually trivialize and take attention away from the landmark structures.

It is worth the attempt to try and build a new building that looks old? I mean, doing it authentically old, not just pasticheish. That is pretty close to impossible these days.

So why not be honest and build a new building that really looks new, then reform today's architecture and technology into that confirm to no one else?

E-mail comments and feedback to afvil@hotmail.com

WOMEN: triumphant in the sculptural pieces "I Am, My Heart," "Light and Mist in Silence" and "Flowing Light."

Iconic imagery of female spirituality

By Constantino C. Tejero

SAMBA Tantjes celebrates womanhood with art derived from pre-Christian imagery and Marian iconography.

A sense of exaltation pervades her first solo exhibit in the country after six years, "Di Immaculata," until Oct. 31 at the Ateliane of Ayala Museum (old Makati Stock Exchange, Ayala Avenue, Makati City).

All the pieces show empowering females in various attitudes of worship, contemplation, nurture, joy, serenity, praying, dispensing of blessings. There's one with a mental armor, and another in a pensive mood.

In "Welcoming the Unknown," in charcoal on paper, the woman has hands upraised like a benign deity to another charcoal, "Blessing," is another woman with upraised hands but more with a Phantasmic aspect and encased like a mummy in garments with a lotus motif, obviously derived from Egyptian art.

"I Remain Warrior," charcoal, depicts a gladiator, like a stoic warrior. "Blessing the Hills," charcoal, shows another glamorous on a hilltop, her voluminous arms cornering rays of light like swords sown to the ground—a modified version of Our Lady of the Immaculate Medal.

The sculptural piece "Smiling Woman (Guardian)" recalls the Sweltering Buddha. "Dance," charcoal, depicting the profile of a joyous nude, could be one of the pagan dancers of Matisse or early Picasso.

The watercolor pieces, some with hazy resemblance to Byzantine icons, have such titles as: "Great Mother," "All Power," "Enthroned," while the sculptures are titled "Peace for with You," "Flowing Light," "Prayers for Healing."

While these are patriarchal assumptions, now it is the woman who reigns and dispenses favors and universal harmony. The whole show—here is a celebration of female power, both physical and spiritual, from pagan times to the present. It is an ode to fertility and healing, peace, light and abundance—in other words, the very simple of matriarchy.

Organic symbol

The figures are rendered in simplified forms: bold outlines with some smudging for the charcoal, tapering to pastel tones for the watercolor, primitive tone marks for the sculpture. All have simple physiognomy evocative of Fernando Amorsolo's rotund figures.

The artist explains this correlation as her way of "inspiration to any person or woman, which has a resemblance in the earth and is connected to heaven."

Each figure has what resembles a halo of radially arranged leaves, dagger-like flames, or simply a circle of light. The artistic aspect is in the crown chakra, which everyone, man and woman, possesses.

She explains leaves symbolize growth, thus connoting that leaves can fall, as she has shown in other watercolor (not in this exhibit) series.

"The connection is up there, but the energy can also fluctuate," she says.

The energy she graphically shows as countless acrylic dots on her wood sculptures. Here pastel tints is used not merely as a pictorial technique but as organic symbol as well.

"Here you see rays from points of light moving in space, in unpredictable ways" she adds. "From my studies of psychic healing, they're energy globules. These dots are my representation of that energy."

Exoteric colors

She uses mango wood for her sculptured pieces, 3-inch thick. With minimum electrical tools, from jigsaw to planer, sander, to engraver, the light wood is chiseled, shaped, then stained with multipurpose to darkness it. The outlines are etched, then filled with innumerable dots of mostly white, and gold, blue, green, orange, red, yellow, purple.

The process is quite meticulous it puts a heavy toll on her. A regular piece could take three weeks to finish.

"Matter up to music," she says, "especially when your ear is guiding the dots. You can't keep at it for 20 minutes, because your vision blurs. Until no to meditation zone."

Her preference for bright to light colors has a spiritual dimension as well: "I refrain from using dark colors. I used to be an expressionist. I started with gutsy no-holds-barring interpretations of the human condition, including its ugly underside but, s. Then, when I time forward as a person, my colors also transformed. I use light colors to show hope, empowerment. Even so, dark colors generate sadness, melancholy anger, pain.

"We have a responsibility about we contribute our works. The world is in a bad shape right now; from what we have read in the tabloids. When something is to paint, black is panopticon. Kasi affected ang mga tao sa sakuna nila—as hindi ko ya sila napitahan ng negatividad."

She summarizes her artmaking: "I am striving for an art that would uplift the soul toward the Divine."

WEST Gallery features Dan Rarala's latex impasto paintings in "Copper Field," on view on Oct. 28-Nov. 11 at Artwalk, 81, Brg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong. The focus on the materials and painting process suggests a free association of images and negates the idea of the subject as a limitation. Photo shows Rarala's "Farmers Hoard."

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Murano via Venice . . .

In Manila

An updated version of the Hillary necklace is just one of the many fine jewelry now on exhibit in Gallery Nine in SM Megamall.

"We decided to launch the line in a gallery because it's not fair to just put them in a store," explains Shen, who eventually asked an Italian [illegible] to negotiate with the Italian miners for exclusive rights to sell their jewelry in the Philippines. "They think of themselves as artists, not just jewelry designers. The jewelry are all handmade and not one item is the same as another."

"The problem with making glass in Venice is that it is easy to be copied because all glassmakers have the skills and technical competence to work with glass," one of the hired Italian users explained in an Italian newspaper.

"It's the idea that counts."

Ohen started selling Sem jewelry last December, with 200 small pieces that were instantly picked up by friends. And because she's doing such jewelry—as any woman would know—is that you can never have enough of them, Ohen has been enjoying great orders.

Now, she also imports bigger and more unusual designs, like glass bags. When the time is right, Ohen says wants to sell a Murano made of Murano glass that she saw in the Sem shop.

"I'm really more a dentist person than jewelry person," she says, not the least surprised by how the's ended up selling jewelry instead.

It seems that for a person simply fond of shopping, adding Murano glass jewelry to the list simply rubs the good taste.

Mabini and Sammel Sem Jewelry are available in Gallery Nine (6/F SM Megamall A; 687-7302 and 890-2704) and (Unit 20, Corner 6 Rob Mezzville.

DIME En. Ara holds his Hilo-rain exhibit, "Lenses in Bloom," in Gallery 139 (Art Space, Glorietta 4, Makati) until Oct. 31. Capturing leaves in every size, shape and color, the artist plastic-in-calipers in polished, painstaking layers so that they resemble a gentle shower in an explosive effulgence.

Davao painter Sillada returns to roots

POET painter-artist Danny Cardenas Sillada will receive the Paedagogia Award for the Visual Arts of Ateneo, Davao Oriental, tomorrow, when the town celebrates the centennial of its foundation. He will receive the award together with Veronica Ariño Peralta, also an artist.

The two are holding a joint show, "Back to Back," at the Nook Center Bldg., Poblacion, Caraga, Davao Oriental. Rep. Cata H. Malalumpan and the Caraga government are sponsors.

A friendly-based artist, Sillada has just held a one-man show at Ayala Museum in Makati. He has also released a limited edition of his selected poems, "Songs of My Troubled Land." The memories and poems show his existential struggle and recurring images of men in Mindanao.

Sillada was educated in Quezon of Apostles College Seminary in Davao, Ecclesiastical Faculties of University of Santo Tomas in Manila, and masters in Manila University.

[illegible]

"BaTTERSCOTCH I," by Karina Baluyut

BALUYUT AND TIOSECO

Zen and zest in abstract art

By Gino Gonzalvo
Contributor

JUMPING from the warmth of colors in canvases that characterize gallery shows today, we can safely say that abstract art is bound for a second coming, no matter the claim of stalwarts of realism and expressionism.

The shift did not of course happen overnight. It could have been the result of radically changing views on modernity, which is often equated with lifestyle and individuality. Indeed, an emerging generation of artists is more enamored with evolving tastes that border on Orientalism and identity rather than the rigorous explorations of form and substance in figurative modes.

Two such artists—both young, inventive and experimental in approach—are Karina Baluyut and Gino Tioseco. They have taken the subjects for abstraction in their show entitled "Strokes at Brushtrees," (Hodges and Hennessy) at the complex Galleries QUE 271 F Guevara St. and Montessori Lane, San Juan).

Their combined output of some 60 pieces in various media—acrylics, watercolors, pastels, and mixed media—bear the influence of various abstractionists whose they identify with, including those from their group, the Canvas Group of Artists.

Tioseco's past works were mostly portraits and landscapes of a markedly expressionist character. Baluyut, on the other hand, who is exhibiting for the first time, is a graduate of architecture and her works, though not entirely abstract, are indicative of an evolving abstract sensibility.

"ESPRONAR Street," by Gino Tioseco

It is well worth comparing the two artists. Tioseco now prefers to work in the purely abstract mode, bearing the influence of Chinese artists Ian and Wu Ki, and, admittedly, of Miro and Lao. Tioseco's imagery is spare and subtle to the extreme, albeit not entirely minimalist in spirit. His brushstrokes recalls the Zen-like cardigans of Lao, with dark blobs pervading the entire grainy field, further highlighted by bright-colored streaks emanating from the hazy images.

Tioseco is obviously fascinated with showing the changing of the seasons and the topography as well as evoking moods while traversing those points of journey. He also manipulates the idea of framing motion in "Standing Without Moving," where stillness, a Zen ideal, is the true measure. Or the idea of waiting for nature's providential acts in "It Can't Rain All the Time." Tioseco is thus a modern chronicler of personal voyages more psychological and intimate than physical and nondescript.

Compared to Tioseco's simple but beguiling imagery, Baluyut's is marked by a spirit of control experimentation. Owing to her architectural background, Baluyut works in patterns nearly laid out in their symmetrically strict but imaginative. And she obviously prefers to work on a bigger area to give vent to her artistic impulses, which she keeps in check with rigorously designed forms. Though she has a series of abstract pieces like Tioseco's, which she, in turn, has painted in blazing red, she also has more subdued pieces, particularly soft tiles—odds and ends of elegantly designed bottles and jars captured in various groupings and configurations.

Easily the most striking works are her "Black and White series," where squares of varying sizes are superimposed and layered on each other, virtually leaving no empty space on her canvases. This is the area where her passion for geo-enfolded design comes off best, a neat balancing act.

But the best of Baluyut's works can be found in the corner piece of the show, the large "Butterscotch 2," a multi-hued, richly-layered series of bands that captures the emerging spirit of the new breed of artists who bears growing intimacy to the viewer. It offers a perplexing combination of technical precision and personal expression.

E-mail the author at gdavisonz@yahoo.com

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2003 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

Stick p24 Diablo

Baldemor's prodigious art

By Cassandra C. Ibjora

"Chillon Castle." At far right: "Mysterious Stonehenge"

MULTITALENTED artist Manuel Baldemor has traveled to over 50 countries since 1975, staying in one country for no briefer than a month. These sojourns not only enrich his art but also translate as an exchange of cultures between his country and the world.

Every time he leaves, he takes along his artworks with Philippine motifs for exhibitions abroad. And every time he returns, he brings a cache of visual records of theaters and cultures he has imbibed abroad.

His newest show in Florida's Art Space depicting ethereal cherry blossoms came from his visits to Japan. The nine paintings in "Timeless Portugal" at Hotel InterCon, which ran simultaneously with his show of "10 8" x 12" photos of Portugal at Rustan's, came from his trips to the Iberian Peninsula.

Now in the massive show "Metacosm," presented by Gallery T until today in the Ali Center at Arnaiz, 4-L, Bldg A, SM Megamall, the artist is celebrating 30 years of his European sojourns.

There are 140 pieces in acrylic, watercolor, pen and ink, and mixed media profiling sites either on the numerous walls of the gallery. There are picturesque landscapes teeming with jewel colors, subtle textures and wide-ranging styles.

The most impressive of the pieces would include: "Images of Valencia," in mixed media, dominated by gold; "Autumn Serenade," mixed media, in muted tones of yellow and gold; "Strasbourg" 10" in watercolor, pen and ink; "Chillon Castle," mixed media, with its olive-green ground, ochre walls and orange sky; "Dunsley Leonia," a greenish impression in mixed media; "Prime of the Morning in Lithuania," daydreamy in watercolor, pen and ink; "Darmstion Cathedral," "Roncalis Cathedral," "The Archangel Cathedral" and "The Church of the Deposition of the Robe," all in acrylic impasto; "Tangarli's Fountain"; 18 watercolor, in blue, gray and rust; "Dubrovnik to Rhine," mixed media; "Amsterdam by Night," acrylic impasto, in various tones of blue dotted with orange, yellow and gold; "Schonau Monchen, Deutschland," impasto, in muted hues of yellow, orange, gold, green, blue, pink, purple; "Grand Place of Brussels," impasto, greenish gold ornate facade with white cottony clouds on aquamarine sky; "Historic Gdansk," mixed media, in pastel washes of pink and green; "Whitehorse," acrylic impasto, very fluid impression in blue and green; "The Sacred Rocks of Mercuru," acrylic impasto, charcoal-gray rock formations crowned with burnt-sienna houses against a turquoise landscape and sky.

Foreign influences

How the world traveler proves to be a master stylist (from impressionism to realism to abstract) and supreme colorist. Hints manufacturer to dilute colors on the palette).

He reveals his favorite artists to be just as wide a variety, from Ben Shn, Picasso, Chagall, Turner, Winslow Homer, to Mondrinsky, Whiting, Boking, Francisco, H.R. Ocampo, Tabuena, Tenorio, Jose Blanco.

Of Shn, he says: "When I was in Switzerland and Germany, I looked at the things and I studied his works and even copied some of them hanggang sa Pilipinas ako. I feel nawawalan ako ganun sa sarili kung original na original ako. I've had my influences. Hanggang ngayon I consider myself under training."

He says his pieces on Stonehenge had been inspired by sculptor Henry Moore's drawings of the massive stone arrangements. "Stonehenge is really sculptures," he adds.

Of Whiting: "Some of my works look similar. Pero mga Aetas naman tapos color explosion. Ang color ko talaga free-wheeling, free."

Of Japanese woodcut artist Hasukuni: "His works are very graphic, spontaneous. Iyon ko nahirapan [sa]."

He has improvised a tool to create the look

BALDEMOR'S CO

Baldemor's prodigious art

"SCHIGNES Munchen, Deutschland"

"ORANGE Place of Brussels"

of woodblock in many of his paintings. A palette knife he lifted till it was rumbled, and this he uses to scrape the wood-ring paint to get the effect of fine parallel lines running across the canvas.

When he travels, he brings along some 100 rolls of films, at 36 shots per roll, this would amount to 3,600 shots, which he spends in one country alone. He uses photos to get the details right for his paintings. Otherwise, he says he paints directly on the canvas or paper without any studies.

"I work only under available light," he reveals. "While most artists use combination working at night, I cannot paint at night. Problems for us today: I cannot get the color I want under artificial lighting. I work religiously every day, 7 a.m.-4 p.m., nine-to-five, from Monday to Friday."

Thus, the prodigious output, and not only in one medium, style or genre. He holds 5-10 shows a year here and abroad, with an annual output of 500-1,000 artworks.

International artist

A Fine Arts graduate from University of Santo Tomas, Baldemor is at once painter, graphic designer, printmaker, cartoonist, collage artist and, being the son of Purita, sculptor.

He has done some painted sculptures (as what his younger brother Angelo is doing with wood high relief). He paints the piece with five layers of acrylic, then cover it with oil.

Watercolor is his usual medium, though. "I find it the most exciting," he explains. "I use it often in my travels because it's mobile, quick-drying, precise, spontaneous. And you can use more imagination and experimentation with it. Unlike with oil, for example, where you have to wait for a week for it to dry so you can apply your next layer of paint."

Being a 'travel' artist for 14 years, his art has been circulating all over the world. One can find it in greeting cards, stamps, even in the packaging of stroller paper.

But he is most proud of his 5-ft x 11-ft mural he did for the United Nations headquarters in Vienna. Titled "Thanksgiving," it depicts a Philippine landscape, using Filamdoc labar sculpture for texture. It has been installed on the lobby of the UN office, and that makes him proud to be a Filipino.

"Monument" is his 121st solo exhibit since 1972. This, by the way, is a record for Filipino artists.

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Lázaro Francisco doesn't live here anymore

By Arnaldo Ma. Guerrero
Circle Dudes

BEHOOLD every year by the National Artist Awards Committee, Lázaro Francisco, (1898-1988), the great Tagalog novelist, now has a more durable tantalizer dedicated to his memory: the Museong Lázaro Francisco. It is located at 3902 Sitong Hindi, Barangay Bonifacio, in the adopted city of the writer, Cabanatuan, capital of Nueva Ecija.

The city government already has an elementary school named after the novelist.

CABANATUAN City's Lázaro Francisco, Tagalog novelist (1898-1988)

Francisco was actually from Unasi, Sinuman, but his parents, being blacksmiths, reportedly incurred the ire of some of the town's overzealous Catholics. So the Franciscos migrated to Cabanatuan where Lázaro (his fame to the younger writers) settled down, married and wrote his major works.

Francisco's first wife was Pelagia Sioson, who gave him four children. A few years after she died, Francisco married Trinidad Arriesa, Miss Nueva Ecija and cited by the Philippine Free Press magazine in December 1926 as one of the reigning beauties in the land.

Trinidad (who passed away in 2006 at the age of 93), a model stepmother, bore Lázaro eight children.

The Franciscos are a remarkable family. All of the children are successful professionals except for three who died tragically before their time: Lázaro Jr., freshman law student at University of the Philippines, killed in the Battle of Bataan in 1942; Imgard T., died in infancy; and Herminia, a third year BS student and prize-winning swimmer drowned in Pampanga River in 1960 while trying to save a friend.

The triple tragedies left their mark on the author, who transformed his grief into deeply felt fiction.

Twelve children—and 12 novels.

Serialized

The novels of Lázaro Francisco were serialized in magazine form, mostly in Liwayway from 1922 to 1962. Six of those have been published in book form in recent years, and six still available in bookstores.

The Ateneo de Manila University Press has come out with three of Francisco's finest works: "Ingat ng Alindog," "Hagupit Ng ang Panginoon" and "Tatsulok."

The University of the Philippines Press has issued reprint editions of "Ang" and "Saan ka Tutungo?" and, just recently, "Hagupit ng Panginoon."

Francisco was both realist and romantic. His love stories unfolded against a social background, which could be unequal relations with the US (he was a nationalist), war, rebellion, injustice and peasant unrest.

He also romanticized the Christian injunction to love one another (the Bible being a dated inspiration).

The 12 original manuscripts of the novels are now housed in the Museo, which was inaugurated and blessed recently. Cabanatuan City Mayor Jay Vergara and Vice Mayor Rachel Mendoza cut the ribbon and unveiled a marker. Ki-Kwebs, an organization founded by its fans in 1958.

The ceremonies were attended by city and Department of Education officials, professors, heads of colleges and universities in the province, and friends and admirers of the author.

Apart from the original drafts of the novels and old letters, the exhibits include rare photos of the writer, rare articles and publications about him, books given by fellow writers, plaques and medals, his old writer's or writing desk, and his antique Remington typewriter.

THE (STANDING) of the Museo marker, with (center) Rafael Francisco, Armando Anja, Cabanatuan City Vice Mayor Rainel Mendoza, Mayor Jay Vergara, Junior Cesar Francisco and (Dr. Florita A. Francisco

THE REMINGTON typewriter which churned out his outstanding novels and other literary works

THE WRITER'S memento

CABINET contains original manuscripts of the 12 novels of Ka Sars.

The Museo is managed by the Lázaro Francisco Foundation, with Justice Cesar Francisco as president, Dr. Florita A. Francisco as vice president and professor Lucila Francisco-Anja as treasurer. All are children of the novelist.

One of the objectives of the Museo is to sponsor seminars in literature and the other arts "on themes that project the ideas espoused by Lázaro Francisco around the devel. opment of a strong Filipino nationalism."

In view of the subversion/ pro-American policy of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration, this last is important.

Bookstore loyalty program marks 3rd year

NATIONAL Book Store's loyalty program, Laking National, celebrates its third anniversary with new group promos this October.

Until Oct. 31, Laking National Card (LNC) members get a free Tshirt for every P1,000 purchase.

LNC members can also take part in the Buy-a-Friend promotion. Until Nov. 10, every successful referral made by an existing LNC member, both old and new members instantly receive free items and qualify for a raffle.

For members get the chance to win P5,000 worth of NBS gift certificates and another 10 will be drawn to win Internet gift certificates.

Top Singapore poet Edwin Thumboo lectures in Manila

ONE of Singapore's distinguished poets, Edwin N. Thumboo, will deliver a lecture on South East Asian Poetry on Oct 29, 3 p.m., at University of Santo Tomas Center for Creative Writing and Studies (UST-CCWS), St. Raymund's Bldg. (All-Commerce), UST, España, Manila.

Joining the lecture are CCWS director Ophelia Alcantara-Dimalanta, National Artist F. Sionil Jose, poet Orlito F. Bautista and the junior associates of the CCWS.

Thumboo is emeritus professor and director of The Centre for the Arts, National University of Singapore. He has contributed to the Singapore art scene mainly in the area of literature and is the author of four collections of poems.

The lecture is open to the public. Call 731-3181 local 8301.

FEDERATION of PHS Alumni Associations Foundations president Angelo Darid, PHS Class '65 president Ramón Marzan, trustee Marcial Morales Jr., PHS principal Dr. Imelda Macaspac, Fr. Melchor Bristow and Ramon Aquino at the CDC Training Center inauguration rites. At far right, PHSAS president Rene Alarcon receives CDC donation of computer tables.

Power company lends muscle to Laguna public schools

By Butch Hernandez
Contributor

TWENTY-EIGHT teachers from seven public schools in Laguna can now rely on a caring corporate partner to help them provide quality education.

The CDC Power Company fronted recently a first-day blitzkrieg the Monteco Pine Seminar at the SPC Canaan to greet home for public school teachers is in front concessionaires.

Engineer Liz Castro, vice-president for environment and community relations, said CDC Power Company's holistic that arm not just about profit. Environment protection and social responsibility were equally important. They found the Alfacelal Revolution an ideal way to affirm their commitment to their host communities.

Andy Salvador, the community relations manager and a former business reporter the teachers from science and business Journalism at the UST Faculty of Arts and Letters on aesthetics), and they had been helping Laguna public schools in various ways even before they joined the revolution.

"But we wanted to help in a more lasting manner, and what better way is there than to bring out the best in our teachers through the Education Revolution?" he said.

CDC Power Company has several college scholarships to 20 high school graduates since last year.

This year, CDC actively participated in the Department of Education's Brigada Eskwela campaign to program.

One of the schools CDC supported—Mayor Bartolomé High School, under principal Nilo de Robles—was cited recently by the DepEd as the most innovative Brigada Eskwela school for establishing the widest network of support from the community.

CDC Power Company is set to inaugurate a gasoline-powered operating a hydroelectric facility in the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan area. It generates 250 megawatts for the Luzon grid.

At the opening of the seminar, assistant superintendent Carlo Benavidez, representing superintendent Lilia T. Reyes said, "The quality of classroom teaching... is very much dependent upon the quality of teachers...in-the school."

She added that nation-building was anchored on educators, on how the youth were trained and prepared to become strong citizens.

Computer center donated

As part of its adoption program for Barangay High School, the PHSAS Foundation, Inc. inaugurated recently its Computer for Quality Education (CQE) Training Center.

Dr. Imelda Macaspac, PHS principal, welcomed the initiative on behalf of the school.

The idea mayor of Pasaleon Glendale Macaspac, PHS has seen better days. The structural integrity is collapse threatened. Many of its have been working all year to help there alone master repair in premier master in Angeles City.

Rene Alarcon, PHSAS president, said there are up-to-date to teach Data Encoding and Computer Terminal courses the students and graduates for free.

The CIC Training Center is just one of PHSAS's Education Revolution projects. Alarcon also said Centro Escolar University, through foundation for Worldwide People Power (WWPP) president Maria Lim Aquino, donated 20 computer tables to PHS for use in the center.

CEU donated earlier about 300 chairs to the school, also through Alarcon's efforts.

Caloocan joins revolution

Caloocan Schools Division superintendent Elizabeth Mateo has taken steps to improve the quality of education of schools under her care.

She has implemented a pilot Education Revolution School Turnpower/next program for the entire faculty of Lerma Elementary School led by principal Rose Gutierrez.

Under the Education Revolution banner, Dr. Mateo joined Dr. Silen Rabonza, vice chancellor of the Philippine Women's University in organizing a pilot School Empowerment session together with Juan Luna Sr. of the University of the Philippines College of Education, Dean Clotilde Aquino of the University of Santo Tomas College of Education, Concepcion Recio of the Poveda Center for Education Formation and Education Dean Helia Peace of St. Jude Catholic College.

In a speech delivered by her by Nenita de Vega, DepEd human resources development chief, DepEd National Capital Region director Dr. Carmen D. Santiago said the PWWPP School Empowerment Program was a very welcome development for Caloocan.

Liz Castro (right), CDC vice president for environment and community relations, with Dr. Evelyn Mallares, PWWPP Mentoring the Mentors national coordinator

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